

ROCKET BOOSTERS!

INTERVIEWS WITH:

NOVA CREATOR & WRITER-
Marv Wolfman

THE NEW
WARRIORS & **NOVA**'s
Fabian Nicieza

NOVA's Upcoming
2007 Team

ARTICLES BY:

THE NEW
WARRIORS & **COMICS** 2 Nova's
Tom DeFalco

NOVA THE HUMAN ROCKET'S
Erik Larsen

NOVA Co-Writer
Dan Abnett

AFTERWORD BY
Andy Schmidt

CELEBRATING
30 YEARS
OF NOVA!

FEATURING:

ARTICLES &
ARTWORK BY

Nova Fans
& Pros!

PLUS AN
ORIGINAL
NOVA MINI-
MARVELS!



FOREWORD BY MARVELOUS MARV WOLFMAN

THE MAN WHO STARTED IT ALL OVER 30 YEARS AGO!

The Man Called Nova has always been one of my favorite characters because he was created with the idea of putting fun back into a Marvel that had grown increasingly more serious over the years, and based on the large number of fans and professionals who have come up to me over the years to tell me how much they loved the character, the goal obviously succeeded.

Back in the late 70s, a mere 15-18 years after Marvel blossomed, I wanted to return to the spirit of the old Spider-Man and Fantastic Four books, the ones that were aimed at the younger readers rather than the older ones. I was already writing Tomb of Dracula, a book written squarely for the older readers, and felt as a company we were inadvertently moving away from what was then the younger fan. There should be comics, in my view, that appealed to everyone, but we were in danger of abandoning the very people we needed to grow into long-term readers who would continue to follow the books into their 20s and beyond. So I believed Marvel needed an entry level comic. And I wanted it to be written with as much care and fun as I could. The Man Called Nova was it.

I wanted to have a "real" home life for Nova's alter ego, Richard Rider. A mother, father, and a brother. In short, a real family. Comics seemed to be about characters who had horrible childhoods: Superman's family was killed along with his whole planet. Batman's parents were murdered in front of his eyes. Peter Parker's parents were dead and his uncle was murdered because of him. Matt Murdoch's father was killed. Everyone's lives were horrendous, but why couldn't there be someone who came from a normal family. No major angst other than having a younger brother who was smarter than you. Richard was an ordinary kid; not overly bright but far from stupid. Totally average school wise. He was a jock, had a decent life and a pretty girl friend as well as a few real friends. Everything was fine for him when lightning struck from God knows where. That's when everything changed for him.

Beyond that I wanted to create a lot of really fun villains. Diamondhead and The Sphinx were my two favorites. Diamondhead because he was so ludicrous and fun, and the Sphinx because I really loved his origin and concept. But there were many other villains, too, and all were designed to further the fun yet serious aspect of the series. The hardest part was grounding Nova in the Marvel sense of reality but not making him so serious we'd alienate the readers I was trying to reach. I'd say on that level I was about 70% successful.

The Man Called Nova was never a huge seller, or at least that's what I was told. It's possible that the readership was even then older than I had expected and didn't want that entry level kind of comic. So eventually the book, to my horror, was cancelled and at the same time I left Marvel for DC (at that point in comics you could only work for one company at a time) and though I really loved the character, I never had a chance to write him again.

I did see that from time to time Marvel brought him back, but it never seemed to stick. I think the problem is that Nova is intrinsically a character designed for a reader who is younger than those reading comics today. He was created to return to a spirit that, for good or bad, people aren't interested in reading other than for nostalgic reasons. I still think Nova could be done as originally intended, and I'd love to write him again, but the book and approach would have to change. I doubt I'll ever be allowed to handle the character again, but who knows?

I do want to thank the secret underground Nova fandom out there. You have no idea how many people come up to me at conventions and tell me how much they loved the book when they were younger. It says to me that the goal I set for the comic was achieved, even if it didn't get the numbers I'd hoped for.

I'm also thrilled to see this Nova netzine. As I say, I loved and still love the character, and it is heart warming to know that the spirit I was reaching for is still appreciated even now, thirty years later. - Marv Wolfman



ROCKET BOOSTERS #1

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Nova art by
Wade Von
Grawbadger



Rocket Boosters #1
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WELCOME TO ROCKET BOOSTERS!

Hi! My name is Doug Smith, Publisher of and Contributor to Rocket Boosters, a very special fanzine devoted to Marvel Comics' ultimate super-hero; Nova!

In 1976, I was 12 years old and already an avid comic collector when I went to the local grocery store in Ft. Madison, Iowa for my weekly comics fix. As I sat in the aisle forming my pile of comics, I saw something new. Something spectacular!

It was an incredible cover of a new super-hero flying through the air surrounded by a montage of cool action scenes. And it was a first issue! I knew this because it told me so in great big bold letters. At that time, I had never collected a series from #1 and had never been able to follow a super-hero from his first appearance. So, I picked it up and WOW! I couldn't believe what I was reading!

Rich Rider turned out to be me! I could relate to him like no other hero around. I've often said that if I were to pick a super-hero that best describes me, Nova would be it. Superman is my favorite DC Comics' character and he's the hero I would strive to be. But Nova's the hero I *would* be, complete with faults & doubts.

Over the last 30 years (yikes!), we've seen Rich Rider go from an insecure teenager who had power thrust upon him to an angry young man trying to find his place in the world to a mature leader who saved the universe. It's been a real thrill to follow his adventures and I can't wait to see what the future holds for the MAN called Nova! It's this character evolution along with Nova's sci-fi roots that has made him so special to me (not to mention that Nova has the best outfit in all comics).

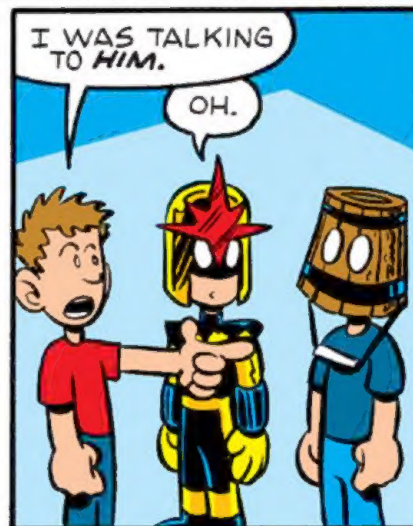
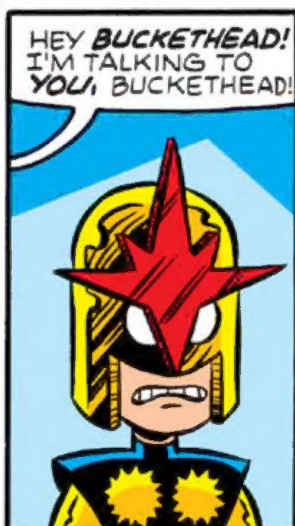
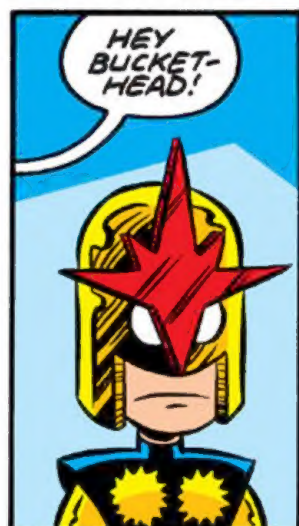
In this issue celebrating Nova's 30th anniversary, you'll find articles from other Nova fans and comic book professionals on how the Human Rocket affected them. Plus, there's fantastic artwork and even some fun extras.

I'd like to thank all the people who volunteered their time and considerable talents to this fanzine. From all of the comic professionals to all of the great Nova fans who were very generous with their help and contributions to the magazine.

So, whether you're a fan from the original series, became a Nova fan during the New Warriors or discovered Nova during Annihilation, I hope you enjoy reading the fanzine as much as I enjoyed putting it together! - Doug

Rocket Boosters is dedicated to the father of comic fandom - the late Jerry Bails.

MINI MARVELS™ featuring NOVA™ by Chris Giarrusso www.chrisgcomics.com



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NOVA: THE PEOPLE'S HERO

By Ben Morse

Cover from *The Man Called Nova* #12



I could never relate to Spider-Man.

All my comic-reading buddies told me I was supposed to, but I couldn't help it. To start with, I knew squat about science—it always struck me as odd that the guy who was supposed to be the “everyman” of comics was a dude that knew enough about biology, chemistry and every other subject I hated in high school to be in the position to get that fateful spider bite in the first place. Next, as much as I hate to alienate any fellow fans out there, I just wasn't that much of a nerd—I wasn't big man on campus or anything, but I certainly wasn't getting thrown into lockers by jocks in letterman's jacket and getting called “Measly Morse.” And then of course the fact that ol' Pete was married to a supermodel by the time I came into the game didn't help either.

Nope, Peter Parker just wasn't me. But Rich Rider—now you're talking.

When I first encountered Nova in the pages of *New Warriors*, he was the quick-tempered would-be frat boy of the team, far from the 1970's roots I never even knew he had. He had attitude in spades, splitting his time between mouthing off to Night Thrasher and swapping spit with Namorita.

A great costume, a quick wit AND he scored with the hot blond in the bathing suit? As an 11-year old trapped in suburbia with a smart mouth of my own, I didn't understand why some 30-year old in a spider outfit had four titles and Nova had none.

I was a kid and I latched onto a character I thought looked and acted cool—nothing out of the ordinary there. But three years later, I had grown up a bit and Nova had gained more than just long hair and an earring. In 1993, “The Starlost” was the story that cemented Nova as my favorite Marvel character once and for all.

“Starlost” (issues 40-42 of the first volume of *New Warriors*) was the quintessential NW epic—with powerful Fabian Nicieza writing and gorgeous art by Darick Robertson as he began to really hit his stride. But it wasn't the Warriors taking on Supernova or guest spots by the likes of Firelord that made this one special—it was the focus on Nova, and one scene from the first chapter in particular.



Panel from
New Warriors #40

In the opening act, Nova, Firestar & Speedball are battling longtime Warriors foe Asylum and ol' buckethead gets caught in the former Psionex member's Darkforce tendrils, causing him to experience his worst fear. What is that fear? That he'd lose his powers (as he had once before) and his friends and family would be left vulnerable without his protection.

And that scene grabbed me like no other moment in my comic book reading tenure to that point had.

Sure I knew every superhero was selfless, that they valued the lives of others over their own, but it never quite connected with me this way. The absolute worst thing that could happen to Nova was not his own death—something he proved later in the story when he was willing to sacrifice his life to resurrect the dead planet of Xandar—but losing the people close to him and not being able to do anything about it.

Nova was the cool guy I wanted to be—he didn't put up with any crap and he got the girl—but he was also the good person I hoped I could be. Not a nerd, not a jerk, just a guy who got superpowers and wanted to do the best he could with them to make the world a better place.

In short: Peter Parker became a hero because he failed to prevent the death of somebody close to him—Nova was already a hero because he would never fail that way.

Sorry Spidey, but you never had a chance.

COMMENTARY

He's Here! The Ultimate Super-Writer! The Man Called Marv

Marv Wolfman can be called, without hesitation, one of the legends of the comic book industry.

Although he is known as the writer of Teen Titans and Crisis on Infinite Earths, to Nova fans from the 1970's, Marv Wolfman will always be known as the creator of Marvel's "ultimate superhero" - Nova! Mr. Wolfman was kind enough to answer some questions about our favorite buckethead.

RB: Of all of the characters you had created for your various fanzines in the 1960's, what made you choose Black Nova to make the jump to professional publication?

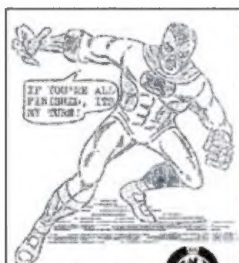
MW: Nova had a good name and I liked the feel of what I wanted to do which connected him so closely to the original.

RB: If I recall correctly, you were writing Dracula at the same time you started 'The Man Called Nova'. Was Nova a book you wanted to write in order to personally lighten your mood due to writing dark vampire stories or was it something you saw the comic book environment needed at that time?

MW: It was both. I needed something lighter to write, something "more fun" to do. I loved writing Dracula, perhaps my favorite assignment ever, but it was, for its time, a very dark book. I also felt comics were starting to get to internal, too dark - though not in the way comics got in the 80s and 90s. I wanted to return to the early Marvel comics, hence Nova.

RB: Were the cast of characters in 'The Man Called Nova' inspired by people you had grown up with? If so, who were they and who were their comic book counterparts?

MW: No. As far as I recall, none of the characters were based on anyone. All made up.



SUPER-ADVENTURES

The Birth and Death of a Star That Went Nova!

In 1966, Marv Wolfman and Len Wein created a new character for the third issue of their super-hero fanzine, Super Adventures. This hero began as a doctor named Denteen who found an alien ship which produced pills that could give a person super-powers for five minutes at a time. Denteen used these powers to become the Star and became a founding member of the super team, the Law Legion!

In an offset supplement to Super Adventures #6 (mistakenly labeled Super Adventures #7 offset supplement), Wolfman and Len Wein changed The Star into a new hero. During a battle between Celestial Man and Cosmic Ray, their energy beams collided and bathed the Star in energy.

The energy split the hero into two beings. In order to save the Star, his ally the Brain changed the Star into a more powerful man called Black Nova!

But unfortunately, Black Nova didn't last long. In Super Adventures #9, the hero sacrificed himself to save the Law Legion from a crashing airship.

Star/Black Nova's powers included flight, laser vision, energy absorption, teleportation and the ability to create illusions. He could also project energy blasts, radioactive gas & freeze beams from his hands.



RB: After the first year of 'The Man Called Nova', the art team went through some changes. What brought about those changes?

MW: Simply put, artists come and go and sometimes get reassigned. I would have loved to have kept John Buscema on the book - he did issue #1 - but he was needed elsewhere.

RB: At the end of your Nova run, the character was left on Xandar to fight the Skrulls with the Champions of Xandar. Do you recall any plans you had for him after that?

MW: I wish I could remember. That kind of stuff - material I never got to do - always fades from memory. I have a pretty good memory for most of the stuff I actually do, but zip for the stuff I don't get around to.

RB: Some folks have made comparisons between Rich Rider and Peter Parker in terms of the characters' personalities and between Nova and Green Lantern (Hal Jordan) in respect to their origins. How would you describe the uniqueness of Nova relative to those comparisons?

MW: Well, Richard was actually nothing like Peter. I used the "In the tradition of Spider-Man" blurb because Stan did it in Daredevil. It was a mood catcher, not an actual concept, other than I wanted to return to those early innocent days. Peter was bright, funny, etc, and Rich was absolutely average. I'd liken Richard and the cast as much closer to Archie and Jughead and company than Spidey. As for Green Lantern, there was no conscious attempt to replicate that origin, but after he came out even I saw that there were some similarities. I was trying to take my fanzine character who got blasted from something from the stars, and elaborate on it, develop it, etc. Now, I was a huge Green Lantern fan, but had I realized how similar their origins were I never would have done it that way. I'd say it was a case of tunnel vision. But once I realized it I did everything I could to steer away from GL. On the other hand, both origins were inspired by science fiction books of the 30s and 40s. Still, I wish I had seen that earlier on.

RB: How do you feel a Nova title could succeed in today's market?

MW: I'm not certain Nova, as we did it back then, could become a huge hit today. He was intentionally light and fun, and definitely meant for the youngest Marvel reader, not the oldest who were reading Dracula, Conan, Shang Chi and Man Thing. These days comics are aimed at folk in their 20s and up, and certainly not kids 10 to 15. To do Nova correctly - or should I say the way we did it then - we'd have to do it in a very different manner and that would change him too much. He is intrinsically a more juvenile character than many others. It could be done, but it would require more changes than I'd want to make. On the other hand, I could see it being done Manga style, which young teens do read. I would downplay the super-hero aspects and play up the teen angst and the SF a lot more.



Left and top right:
Panels from The Man
Called Nova #5 (1976)

Right: Cover to The Man
Called Nova #1 (1976)

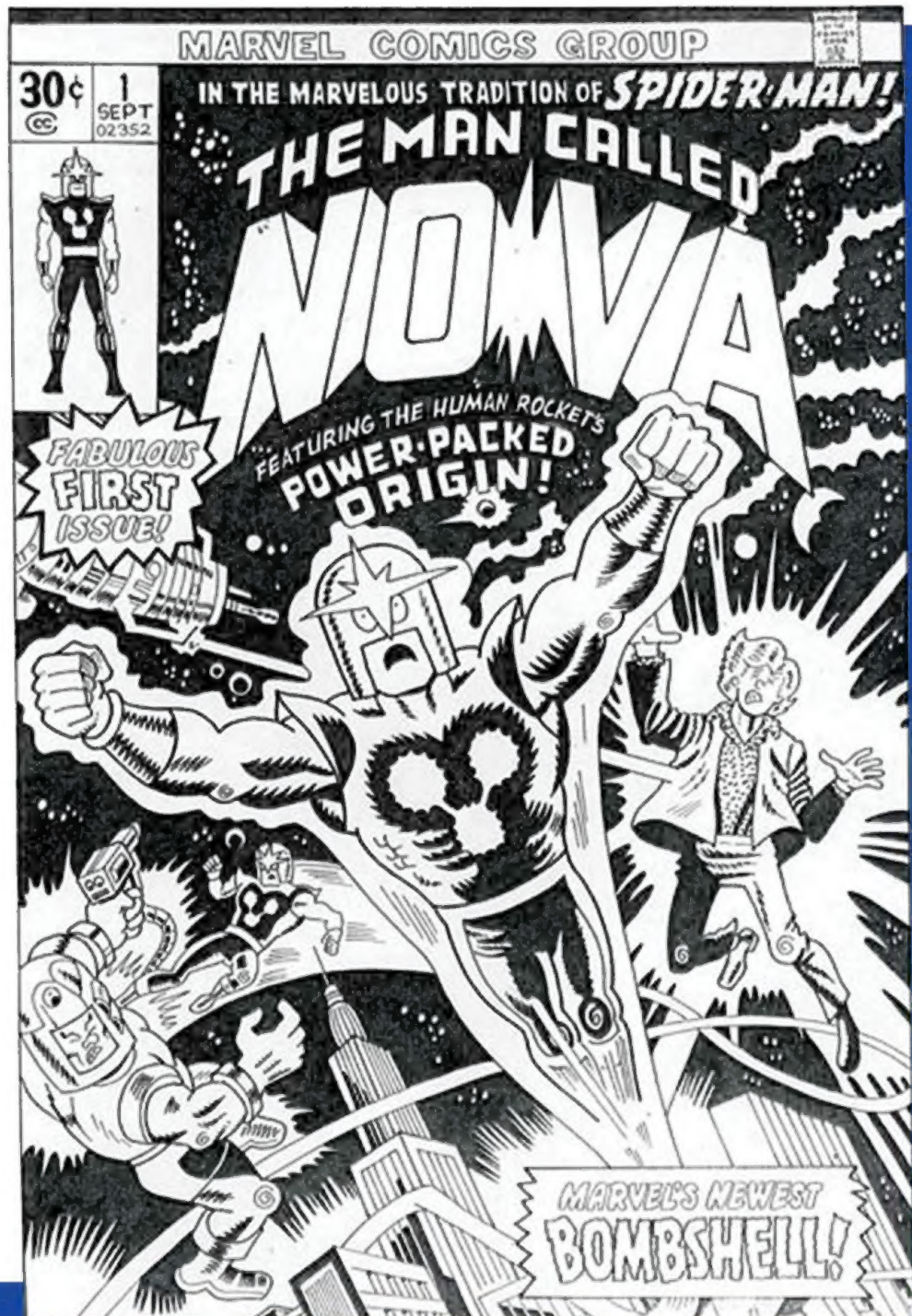


FRED SEZ!

Back in 1976, when Nova made his newsstand debut, I was living in Buffalo and finishing up my college career. I was also going through the first of what's turned out to be many, many second childhoods. Y'see, while I was still enthusiastically following the current books being issued by Marvel (and DC), I was probably for the first time looking back on the comics I had bought over a dozen years earlier, this time from a more adult perspective. So, while I fully appreciated how the House of Ideas had increased their sophistication level over those years, there was a part of me that suddenly longed for the simpler charms of early issues of Journey Into Mystery, Tales To Astonish, Strange Tales and the like. Into this nostalgic vacuum of mine suddenly stepped Nova, and I was immediately smitten! I even wrote a letter to let the folks in charge know how delighted I was with their latest title. Going solely from memory, I believe this is the line they pulled from my LOC: "Nova--a simple comic that ISN'T simple-minded!"

Thirty years later, I'll stick by that!

Fred Hembeck



First Flights to Glory: The Man Called Nova

By Don Lund

Every adventure begins with a fateful first step. In Richard Rider's case, it was an

ungraceful fall to the floor at the hand of a high school bully, but he landed just right. As in, he landed right in front of the path of a burst of energy from outer space, granting a kid the chance of a lifetime. Within that burst from an alien craft, rode the hopes of a dying warrior. Nova Centurion Rhomann Dey, sent the powerful beam randomly toward Earth. Forever changed, a young man, previously suffering a substantial dose of inferiority, embraced the fortunate opportunity to make the world a better place.

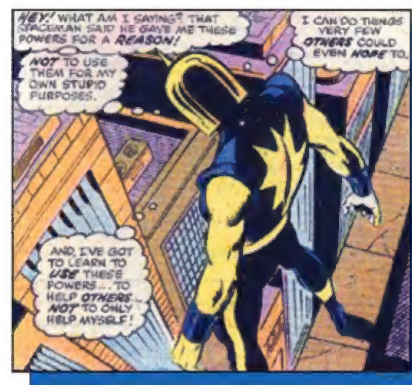
For newer readers who may have missed out on the day-to-day, month-to-month wait for new exploits of the young super-hero as they occurred during the mid to late 1970's, it is never too late to discover Nova's humble beginnings. Just after the dust had settled on the Silver Age and well before the grip of grim and gritty comics dominated the fictional super-hero landscape, there was a little room for some fun.

From the rare pages of a homemade fanzine, Super Adventures, the Black Nova was born again into the Marvel Universe as one Richard Rider. The updated Nova had a lot of help in that transformation, from the imaginations of Marv Wolfman and John Romita, who tweaked the original visual design of the always versatile Len Wein. As a kid just a few years younger than the character in the comics, it was an interesting era to be introduced to a new face from the Marvel Universe. The first issue of Nova hit the stands in the bicentennial year of 1976, shortly before another sci-fi phenomenon kicked in the following summer called Star Wars. The initial issues were only thirty cents a pop, but they were not easy to find at the corner store. However, some of those things they now call "comic specialty shops" began to appear and alter the way most fans of the super-hero genre bought their books. These places had back issues, and copies on the stand that were not dog-eared and pre-read a dozen times before.

I was already a semi savvy veteran comic fan of several years, but had only recently started to focus on a few characters and series that really stood out to me as favorites. Prior to that, I would read any kind of comic, from Action Comics, to Tarzan to Archie, without any specific preference. Marvel's Avengers led me to finding The Mighty Thor and suddenly that particular faux Universe really started jumping off the page and I couldn't get enough.

Enter Rich Rider, with the blazing bright yellow bucket, the wicked cool, futuristic space suit and the ability to adventure anywhere from downtown New York City to the far reaches of deep space. And the biggest hook? Rich was you or me or any one of us lucky enough to be standing on that spot in any ice cream parlor, U.S.A. We learned about his powers as he did. We learned the tough lessons as he overcame them and we all gained the knowledge of how to become a better hero.

Forget the easy comparisons to Spider-Man as the "everyman" hero or that Nova was Marvel's very own version of DC's Green Lantern, because this good guy stood apart from the crowded stable of super-powered beings. Sure, the identity of Nova was an homage, a literal tip o' the cap to Stan 'the Man' Lee's love of alliteration such as Peter Parker, Matt Murdock, Reed Richards, Sue Storm and of course, J. Jonah Jameson, among others. That aside, the cosmic elements and responsibilities beyond the duties on earth are a monumental difference for Nova versus the wall-crawling back alley motif of Spider-Man. Sure, Rich always tried the one-liners but he never really hit the same funny bone as Pete did back in the day.



The biggest difference? Mr. Parker constantly fought against the weight of that “great responsibility” while Rich always embraced his chance to be the big hero. He embraced it to a fault and even in those moments later in his history, when those amazing powers granted to him by Xandar were stripped away, he fought to get them back. He fought to keep that “great responsibility.”

As for the Green Lantern stuff, that Hal Jordan fellow was already an adventurous, heroic test pilot long before he got his power ring. He was also specifically chosen, as a human being most worthy of that alien power. Destiny was the driving force of Hal’s origin, not blind luck on a wing and an alien hope shot into space.

Another fairly unique element for this character is he had a complete family and no wacky love triangle. Yes, that is correct. No dead father, no avenging son, Rich Rider had normal parents and a little brother who was, of course, smarter than he was. His girlfriend, Ginger, liked him long before she inevitably discovered his secret identity. Rich’s friends were as dorky as he was and the life away from saving the world was far more ordinary than most of his Marvel or DC counterparts.

And while the Nova Corps wasn’t a major factor early on in the first run of Nova, that ‘space militia’ was a force designed to protect the remnants of a destroyed planet. They were not like a galactic police force covering a universe. The Nova Corps, as it has been rebuilt a couple times now, were always defense first for Xandar, before looking to protect other worlds. Their influence expanded in that galaxy, but not always with benevolence. Of course, including very recent events, Rich is the entirety of the Nova Corps.



From The Man Called Nova #1

Ultimately, these character comparisons all end up in the same place anyway. Someone invariably will point out the entire genre is derived from Superman, and in turn, the last son of Krypton was influenced from existing myths and pulp heroes. The bottom line is, these first issues, for those fortunate fans who experienced them as they hit the shelf, took readers to brand new corners of the Marvel Universe. And I mean well beyond the near mystical ice cream parlor of Uncle Fudge.

Getting zapped with the Nova Force and becoming a super-hero in the first issue was only the start of it all. Rich Rider survived his first fight against an adversary, a destructive alien fellow named Zorr, with a final assist from Rhomann Dey.

From there, well, that rogue’s gallery of Nova’s has always needed an upgrade in my humble estimation, but it wasn’t the power of the foe that kept readers on the edge of their collective seats, it was the way Rich approached his new role in life. It didn’t matter how many times he made mistakes, got knocked down, the kid always dusted himself off and got back in the ring.

One of my favorite examples of overcoming that adversity occurred very early on in the series, when the cover of Nova #4 displayed a conflict with the Norse god of thunder. Before I turned to page one, I knew Rich was in over his head. A mind controlled Thor (under the influence of the evil Corruptor) is an especially dangerous foe for anyone in the Marvel Universe, much less a rookie just figuring out his full range of capabilities. Yet, The Man Called Nova found a little luck, when a new ability was found in his alien costume, protecting him from drowning, and a lot of smarts, guts and determination to win the day.

Nova was one of those heroes who didn’t need to be the most powerful to be among the most interesting. The youthful enthusiasm, the want to learn and be a better person, a better hero, with just enough muscle and ability to make a difference against overwhelming odds, was the big draw for me. Certainly the wily machinations of the Sphinx could prove to be a challenge for any number of Earth’s Mightiest Heroes, yet he too would find just how indomitable a high school kid could be, on a good day.

There were a lot of good days among those early escapades that lasted every month for about a year and a half before the series went bi-monthly after 1977. There were only six glorious issues in 1978, taking the series from #17 through #22. While I've yet to see a formal record of the sales of the series, whatever those numbers were, apparently the audience of the time wasn't enough to sustain a solo book. Thus, the first volume was concluded in May, 1979 with issue #25.

The story continued in *Fantastic Four* #206, 208-209 and culminated in *Rom* #24 in November of 1981. Nova also visited *The Amazing Spider-Man* #171, and *Marvel Two-In-One Annual* #3 along the way. He made a quick cameo in *Daredevil* #142 and even hung out with Pete Parker once more, in a non-continuity tale over in *Super Spidey Stories* #41, before temporarily retiring to the back of dusty handbook tomes.



Fortunately, life is never completely over for characters in serial super-hero fiction. For Richard Rider, these initial forays into the Marvel Universe were really just a start, as the character was later pegged by Tom DeFalco to be a part of the New Warriors a scant eight years after these first flights to glory.

Top 10 Reasons Why **NOVA** Is Better Than **THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN** And **GREEN LANTERN**!



We've all heard the comparisons before. Due to the clever alliteration homage by Marv Wolfman in honor of Stan Lee (i.e., Richard Rider and Peter Parker), there are many comparisons to Spider-Man. Or, because of the once mighty Nova Corps, there are the obvious similarities to the recently reborn Green Lantern Corps over at DC. We here at Nova HQ consider Rich unique, and here are our first ten reasons to contrast some of the differences!

1. Why crawl when you can fly? Nova has top-notch alien technology and enough edge to constantly push the envelope, regardless of his power level or level of adversity. Spidey has to rely on wits more often than not, while Rich relies heavily on his speed, power and ability to take punishment. A lot of punishment.
2. Nova thrives in outer space. During his time in space, Nova has fought off an invasion by the Skrulls, restored a world to life and saved two universes from Annihilation. Spider-Man's record in space? One word: Venom.

3. Not "everyman" always wants the job. Okay, so they were not born gods, mutants or were trained as soldiers. Spider-Man and Nova get the "everyman" label since their humble origins were similar as regular guys walking into radioactive spiders or being in the right place to pick up the powers of a Xandar Centurion. However, Rich always wanted his powers, Pete has walked away a few times. When Rich has lost his powers, he wants them back! He loves being a hero.

4. Buckets are better than bug eyes. Every other hero has a mask of some kind, only a valiant few can sport a bucket as well as Rich Rider!

5. Spider-Man is married to a hot, red-headed super-model. Nova had an ex-girlfriend charge him with murder...um...ok, Spidey wins that one.

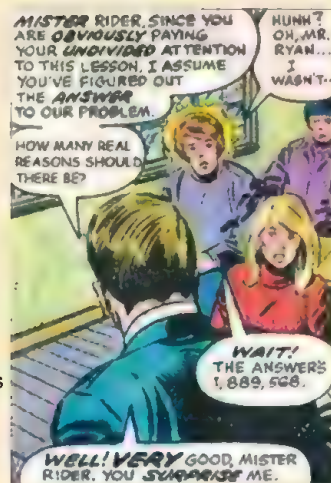
6. Nova Corps is dead. Sad but true, so the current comparisons to a Green Lantern Corps are moot. That said, the GLC just got back after a decade long vacation, the Nova Corps may yet return as well. The difference is, the Nova Corps was a military unit, the Lanterns are a police force. Xandar's Corp was to protect a planet and a people, while those green people are out to serve and police an entire Universe!

7. Random Rich. Okay, so the dying alien handing off the hero baton is frighteningly similar, but the ring of the Green Lantern went on a mission to seek out the most worthy, fearless person on the planet. Rich was a random dude trying to grab a hamburger. Okay, so eating a burger these days takes a fearless attitude, but there is a difference!

8. No batteries required! Rich may not have an endless amount of energy, but he isn't tied to any kind of power source, or little blue aliens giving him his next assignment.

9. Rich rides alone. A couple of times now, Rich Rider has been the lone ranger of the oft destroyed Nova Corps. The Green Lantern Corps is growing to 7,200 strong with TWO heroes per sector. Kyle Rayner got the solo gig for a while, but now he has an entirely new job description and may be as tough as the Worldmind powered Rich Rider!

10. Fear is fine. Rich has as many fears as he does hopes and dreams. He may not be worthy of a fearless Green Lantern ring, but why wear jewelry, when you can wear a bucket to save the Universe? So, the kid gets a little rattled, but he always gets enough nerve to get back up and win the day.



NOVA PRIME STARSHIP

BLASTERS AND SERVO-DRONES



FOR DEFENSE, THE SHIP HELD AN ARRAY OF HIGH ENERGY BLASTERS ALONG WITH SERVO-DRONES WHICH REPAIRED DAMAGE.



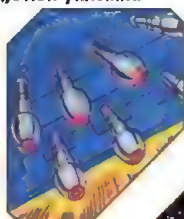
WEAPONS ROOM

CONTAINED VARIOUS HAND HELD WEAPONS AND AN ARSENAL OF LARGER MOBILE ASSAULT CANNONS.

THE SHIP CONTAINED VARIOUS METHODS OF SECURITY INCLUDING MOTION TRACKING LASERS AND A LARGE NUMBER OF ROBOTIC SENTRIES.



ROBOTS



LASERS

AN ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE SYSTEM LINKED TO THE LIVING COMPUTERS ON XANDAR AND CONTAINED THE BRAIN PATTERNS OF FORMER CENTURIONS.



COMPUTER PRIME

THE SHIP WAS MENTALLY CONTROLLED FROM THE COMMAND CHAIR AND FEATURED A LARGE VIEWSCREEN.

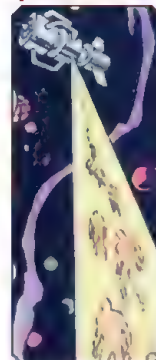


BRIDGE

THE STARSHIP MEASURED ONE MILE IN LENGTH!



TRANSPORTER



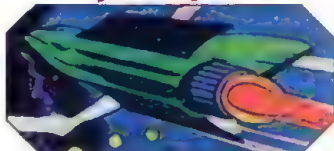
CONVERTS BEINGS TO ENERGY AND TELEPORTS THEM TO A PLANET'S SURFACE.

CLOAKING DEVICE & FORCE SHIELDS



THE CLOAKING DEVICE RENDERED THE STARSHIP INVISIBLE. THE SHIP COULD BE SEEN THROUGH SPECIAL LENSES IN NOVA'S HELMET. IT ALSO HAD A FORCE FIELD FOR PROTECTION.

SHUTTLE CRAFT



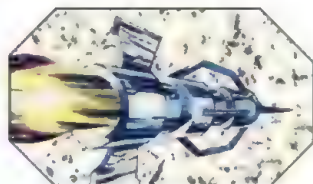
HIGH SPEED SHUTTLE ALLOWED PERSONNEL TO LEAVE THE SHIP FOR MISSIONS. COULD NOT ENTER A PLANETARY ATMOSPHERE.

DIMENSIONAL PHASER



CAPABLE OF SHIFTING PERSONNEL TO ANOTHER DIMENSION FOR SAFETY DURING AN EMERGENCY. ACTIVATED BY A PALM CONTROL ON THE WALL.

WARP DRIVE



USED SPACE-PHASING FOR FASTER THAN LIGHT TRAVEL. THE SPEED CAUSED THE SHIP TO ENTER A STATE CALLED "PHASE CONDITION" IN WHICH THE COLORS OF SPACE ACTUALLY REVERSED!

The Nova Prime Starship was the largest, fastest and most powerful ship in the Xandarian fleet.

The ship was captained by Centurion Nova Prime and could be controlled by a Syphon Warrior or via Computer PRIME. During its lifespan, the ship fought off Zorr, the threat of the Terrible Trio and was used extensively in the Skrull/Xandar War.

It was also borrowed by the Fantastic Four in their pursuit of Galactus. The starship was presumably destroyed in Xandar's battle with Nebula.

NOVA NEWSLINE!

© MARVEL COMICS GROUP, 575 MADISON AVE. N.Y.C. 10022

A Memo From Marv!

Why Nova?

Actually, this answer is an easy one, but one which must

To those who care about such things, another paragraph or two about Nova's genesis. Over ten years ago when the editor was

When i was young, I turned 40 in June. I loved Spider-Man. I always wanted #1 though. So one day I walked into my Majik Mart and there was a new guy. NOVA! NOVA# 1! He was my guy! In the tradition of Spider-Man, there was this cool guy with this really cool helmet. Great artwork.. great stories. I LOVED him! He was MINE!!! I remember when Infantino took over the artwork and I was like... what is this? Then issue 25 came out... He's GONE! I cried... really, I cried. Now he is back! I hope he stays. He needs to be a New Avenger...but that's my opinion. LONG LIVE BULLET HEAD!!!!

John Crutchfield

"Nova was *my* hero. I was around for the beginning with him. When I was a kid, I read other comics -- Avengers, X-Men. Thor -- but I joined those parties long after they started. With Nova, I was in on the ground floor. He was new and he was mine. Loved the costumes, loved the villains like Condor and Diamondhead and the Sphinx. Sure, my adult sensibilities now tell me that Nova had more than a dash of Spider-Man and Green Lantern in his lineage. But who says that's a bad thing? I think it's pretty obvious that Rich Rider is, in some ways, an ancestor of Kyle Rayner."

Ron Marz - Writer of Green Lantern and Silver Surfer

NOVA kicked off in 1976, only about a year and a half or so after I started following comics regularly. So it was nice to be able to follow a new hero right from the start -- and those first two issues of John Buscema art sure didn't hurt! I think what hooked me about it was the sense of fun they brought to it -- Marv was doing good old straightforward superhero adventure, John made the characters sympathetic and approachable looking, Nova had a basic but very appealing set of powers, and unlike many superheroes, he actually seemed to enjoy using them. I think the panel where he flew through a bunch of pigeons and said, "Hello dere, birds -- the name's Nova!" or some such line, that was what made me a Nova fan to this day. He felt like somebody I might know, and did the sort of things I might do, if I had powers. And a bucket on my head.

Kurt Busiek - Writer of Avengers, Superman and Marvels

I was a very impressionable 10 year old in September 1976 and a fan of comic books and science fiction... and Nova was the ultimate wish fulfillment character, the everyman turned cosmic hero. I've been a fan ever since, through decades of Nova not quite living up to the promise of his inception. Annihilation turned him from the buffoon we'd been tolerating in recent years, into the hero all of us fans were waiting to see... I'm genuinely excited for his future.

Hank Driskill



ROBERT RIDER



CHARLES RIDER



GLORIA RIDER



MIKE BURLEY



UNCLE FUDGE



Nova sketch by Jim Lee commissioned for Ben Morse. Thanks to Ben for sharing this great piece of art!

"MAKE MINE NOVA"

BY TOM DEFALCO

ACTS OF VENGANCE



Comic book characters are a lot like real people.

You form an immediate bond with some. Others just annoy you. The great majority, however, have absolutely no affect on you. You're content to spend a little time with them, but not too much. You're happy enough to run across them, but you're not really going to seek them out. You may call them your friends, but they really just acquaintances. That's kind of how I felt about Nova when I first met him.

Someone (and I really wish I could remember who) once told me that the Golden Age of Comics is whenever you, personally, began to read them. My Golden Age began when I was around six years old and a cousin showed me a Batman comic. I got a second Golden Age when I was around ten or eleven and discovered the Fantastic Four and maybe even a third when I first spotted Amazing Fantasy #15 at my local candy store.

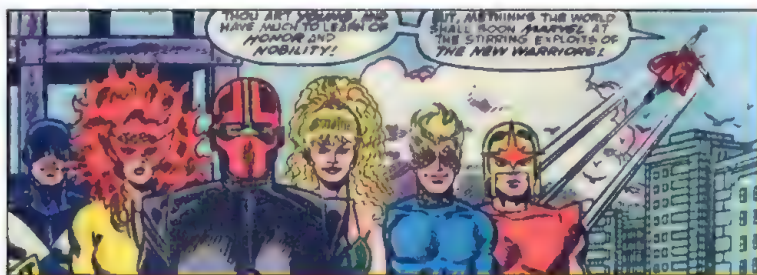
By the time Nova first appeared in 1976, I was already working in the industry for Archie Comics, doing my best to create Golden Ages for others.

Since I was (and still am) a fan of both Marv Wolfman and Sal Buscema, I bought every issue of Nova. Marv and Sal are wonderful craftsmen and they told some terrific stories. While I could appreciate the series on many professional levels, I didn't really have a personal connection to the character. Maybe I was just too old.

Ron Frenz, however, was just the right age. He instantly bonded with Nova and really cared about what happened to Richard Rider.

That's probably why he wanted Nova in the New Warriors.

It's no secret that I have always enjoyed working with teenage characters. I also think they're important to the growth of the comic book industry. They give the next generation of readers an easily identifiable entry into the hobby. Spider-Man and I were teenagers together. (Peter Parker was a little older than me when we first met. Regrettably, that's changed over the years.) Nova was around Ron's age when his first series began. (And I believe a new generation of readers is growing up with Exiles and Runaways.)



Ron and I brought the New Warriors together because we felt that Marvel needed a team of super-powered teenagers. (Someone in the sales department totally misunderstood our concept and suggested we call the book Avengers Academy and make it a book about Young Avengers--as if anyone would buy that concept!)

Fabian Nicieza was assigned to write the New Warriors and I am so glad he was. Not only did Fabian do a fantastic job, he made me care about Nova. I suddenly began to bond with Rich Rider and to really understand the character. Rich was a guy who used bluster to cover his insecurities, who didn't really believe that he was worthy of his powers and was constantly trying to prove himself.



After losing his powers in Rom #24 (1981), "Kid" Nova reappeared fully powered as a New Warrior in Thor #411 (1989). The adult Nova of the M2 Universe first appeared in Spider-Girl #7 (1999).

Years passed and one day Ron Frenz and I were assigned to write an issue of What If. We put together a story about Spider-Man's daughter, little dreaming that we'd still be working on her nine years later.

When Spider-Girl was assigned her own title, Ron and I spent hours discussing her world. We wanted MC-2 (Marvel Comics 2) to seem like a natural outgrowth of the Marvel Comics of our youth, a world where all the heroes and their sacrifices had a positive affect. We also had to decide who was still around.

I'm pretty sure Ron came up with the idea that Nova was active and doing great. Rich Rider had finally made it as a super hero. He had proven himself over the years and had become one of the planet's greatest protectors. In many ways he was the MC-2's version of Superman or Captain America--a hero the public trusted and respected.

Of course, he looked at Spider-Girl and a lot of her contemporaries as beginners--rank amateurs who were in over their heads and were constantly putting themselves in needless danger. He wanted to help them, to protect and guide them. Like any experienced adult, he often offered the younger generation the benefit of his knowledge...and usually came off sounding like a pedantic fool.



Above: Panel from Spider-Girl #16

He knew the proper way for super heroes to behave.
The correct technique to handle a specific super-villain.
The best method to employ in certain situations.
He had ALL the answers.

Yikes! Rich and I had become more and more alike over the years. We now shared a very tight--and ANNOYING --bond.

I guess that's why he keeps popping up Spider-Girl and assorted other MC-2 projects. He's the voice of wisdom who remembers the good old days, but the new generation isn't really interested in what he has to say.

Comic book characters are a lot like real people. You form an immediate bond with some and others grow on you over time. That's kind of how I feel about Nova. - Tom DeFalco

MARVEL BURGER



Your Choice!

\$2.00 off
Galactus Burger

\$1.00 off
Fantastic Fries

A **FREE** Super Mutant Hot Dog
with every large Silver Slushie!

Order valid at all participating Marvel Burgers. Offer expires on the next invasion of Galactus. Marvel Burgers is currently hiring. Ask inside.

Uncle Fudge's Ice Cream Emporium



**\$1
off**
All
Items

**"You Can Always Count
On Your Favorite Uncle!"**

GOLD'S GYM



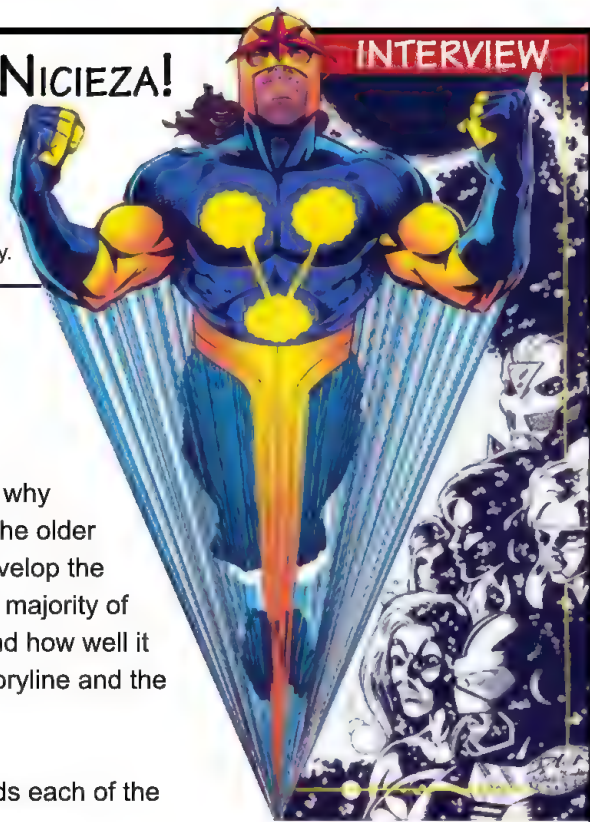
**1 Week Free
Membership!**

Order valid at the gym located on 5th Avenue in Queens in the Marvel Universe. It's not affiliated with the actual Gold's Gym.

CHATting WITH THE CHIEF WARRIOR - FABIAN NICIEZA!

After the New Warriors were created by Tom DeFalco and Ron Frenz in Thor #411, it fell on the shoulders of a young writer named Fabian Nicieza to forge this new team of young rebellious super-heroes into a successful title. He not only made them one of the most popular titles of the 1990's, he was able to get Nova a second solo series! Fabian took a few moments to reflect on the team he turned into a family.

INTERVIEW



Cover from New Warriors #40

RB: In the beginning of the New Warriors, many Nova fans from his original series were hesitant about your version of Rich Rider. Were you confident you could win them over given time?

FN: Not really, but I was confident in the decisions I was making and why I was making them. I knew it would be a hard sell no matter what to the older Nova fans, but I also felt it was an important new dynamic to help develop the character, as well as within the context of a group setting. I think the majority of older Nova fans who stuck with the book saw what we were doing and how well it was working little by little, especially after the "Forever Yesterday" storyline and the restoration of his original costume template.

RB: How would you describe Rich's relationships and feelings towards each of the original New Warriors?

FN: He loved them like family. The same kind of love you have for your slightly backward second cousin whose left elbow always spasms uncontrollably when someone changes the channel on the tv remote. No, seriously Rich would look at the Warriors the same way a true sports player thinks of his teammates -- when they've played together for a while through thick and thin, forged comradery and unspoken bonds between them.

RB: In the StarLost Saga in New Warriors #40 - #42, you introduced a subplot involving a domed world of Xandar that had disappeared after Nebula's attack. What did you have planned for that world and what was the back-story behind its disappearance?

FN: Uhm... I don't remember. Seriously, that was a long time ago.

RB: After the StarLost Saga and the rebuilding of Xandar and the Nova Corps, the Corps became more of a Green Lantern Corps-esque group with different alien races protecting their own sectors of space instead of just Xandar. What led you to take the Corps in that direction?

FN: Because I wanted more of a Green Lantern Corps-esque concept in the Marvel Universe. :-)

RB: What exactly was the relationship between the Shi'Ar Empire and the Xandarians after Xandar was rebuilt?

FN: If I recall, my approach to all things involving the Shi'Ar is that they were benevolent supremacists. Their approach and intent was often altruistic, but they would practically force their goodness -- or their definition of goodness -- on any race they "brought into their fold." Xandar was in no position to push back too much, but they would have been a perpetual thorn in the side of the ruling Shi'Ar regime.

Left: Panel from New Warriors #42



RB: How did the character of Nova 0:0 come about?

FN: It was the early 90's and it was a prerequisite that I do at least one stupid thing per title I wrote.

RB: You had Nova involved in a number of battles with his arch-enemy, the Sphinx. How do you feel the relationship between Nova and the Sphinx evolved during your time with the characters?

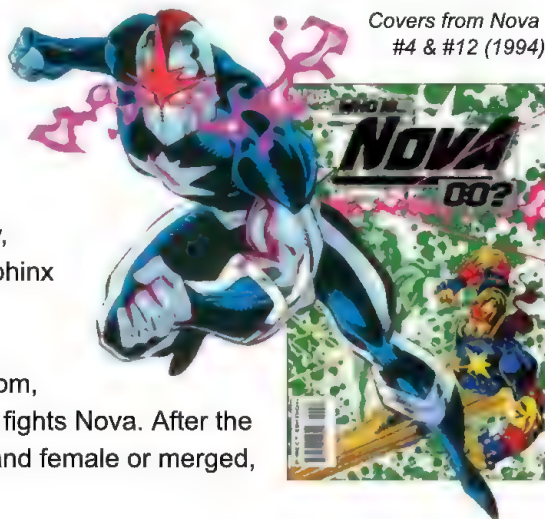
FN: Certainly Sphinx is Nova's arch-nemesis, his Lex Luthor or Dr. Doom, but as a concept, Sphinx is a bit too big to work well as a foe who only fights Nova. After the "Time After Time" storyline, I had planned to give the Sphinxes, male and female or merged, a nice long hiatus.

RB: Was the romantic involvement between Nova and Namorita something you had planned from the beginning of the series or was it something that evolved naturally over your run?

FN: No, I planned it from the first issue, but it was really born of the ease with which I could write their dialogue. They were a good match, I thought. Nice romantic tension between them throughout my entire run.

RB: Are there any fun Nova anecdotes or little known 'behind-the-scenes' stories you would like to share?

FN: Just lots of fun within the offices of me pleading, begging and fighting to officially change Nova's name back to just Nova and drop the "Kid" part. I milked that one for all I could making fun of Tom DeFalco as often as I could get away with it before he'd club me to the floor with his ham-sized fists.



Covers from Nova
#4 & #12 (1994)



Left: Cover from New Warriors #39



"Overnight service is yesterday's news - We give you over-minute delivery!
Tomorrow's business needs - - today!"

Robert Rider
Nova Express
Business Manager



**Faster than a fax --
'cause he's faster than LIGHT!**



Call



Post

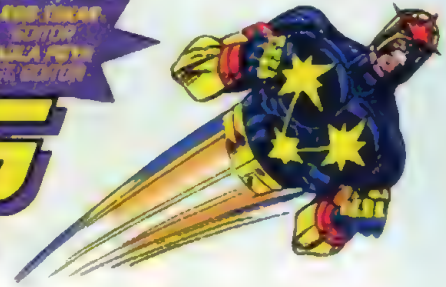


Receive

Disclaimer: The above is a fictional advertisement for the express delivery service Nova ran throughout the 1994 series.

ROCKET BOOSTERS

C/O MARVEL COMICS, 387 PARK AVENUE SOUTH, NEW YORK, NY 10016
ALL LETTERS TO BE CONSIDERED FOR PUBLICATION MUST INCLUDE YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS,
ALTHOUGH WE WILL WITHHOLD THAT INFORMATION UPON REQUEST.



Dear Rob,

Thank you for bringing back the
rich Nova in NOVA #6! A fan of

ently.

Unfortunately I found the most
interesting parts of this book to be

Rage—still not sure he seems like a
14-year-old. I'm still watching and
reading.

It was late 1976, near September. When I woke that morning there was no indication that it was going to be anything other than an ordinary day. As I went about my routine, events unknown to me had been set in motion that would soon impact my happy but complacent existence. I had never heard of Zorr or of the Lumphomoid Race. I had never heard of Rhomann Dey or of the planet Xandar, but they were out there and they were about to change my life forever.

It was late afternoon when I entered my local Comic Book store. I walked over to the new releases and it happened. I was struck. Like a bolt of energy from a dying Alien Centurion passing on his powers. I was struck. As the awesome impact subsided I could still feel the energy burning inside me. I looked at my hands. I was holding the first issue of the man called NOVA. I was struck. The words on the cover still fill me with awe "In the Marvelous Tradition of Spider-Man!" "Fabulous First Issue!" "Marvel's Newest Bombshell!" Back then that really meant something.

I opened the book and began to read. Each page drawing me deeper and deeper into sympathetic alignment with Richard Rider and his life. He was me; I was him. It was like this story and this hero were written for me. With each month came a new issue securing my connection to the Human Rocket. The man called NOVA has had his ups and downs over the years that followed. Good writers, Bad writers, Good Artists, Bad Artists, but the impact of that first moment had forged a bond no writer or artist could ever destroy.

So, as it turns out it wasn't a bolt of energy from a dying Alien Centurion that struck me that day in 1976, but the awesome talent of a man who puts his heart and soul into everything he does. A storyteller who delivers a human connection in each and every adventure he writes. Now, thirty years later, I would like to finally say, thank you Marv Wolfman, you are the NovaForce.

Tom Brennan

My family and I were at a swap meet and we found a box of comic books on sale for a minimal price. There were approximately 20 of the original Nova series in the box, including issue #1. Nova's suit was original, and Rich was a kid who was trying to find his way in the school world as a social outcast. I could not wait to Rich grow into the cosmic hero he was supposed to be.

I wrote my first letter to Marvel giving them suggestions about what they could do with Rich and his powers. I received a postcard with the Hulk in the corner reading a letter. Marvel's response was "sorry the series has been canceled." As a kid I could not understand it. Nova was gone! I thought I read the card wrong, but I did not. And I have been disappointed several other times. That is until Annihilation came along. Now like other Nova fans, I am happy again.

Jimmy

Interesting and entertaining. I can't help but think that something's missing. Maybe if Rich Rider the person was explored more and I understood him better I would feel differ-

ably. Same as his powers, as in NOVA vol. 1, #1, he had energy powers of some sort. Good tie-in and great planning. Sorry for doubting.

plays host to the duke out of the decade against Doctor Doom, Dragon Man, the Hulk and the awesome power of ARMADA!

CHRIS MARRINAN'S SKETCHBOOK!

GALLERY

Chris Marrinan began as the artist on Nova's second series in 1994. After Fabian Nicieza left the book following issue 7, Chris added writer duties to his workload. He wrote and drew issues 8 through 16. The following pages feature a number of Chris's sketches and designs from his run on Nova.

NOVA



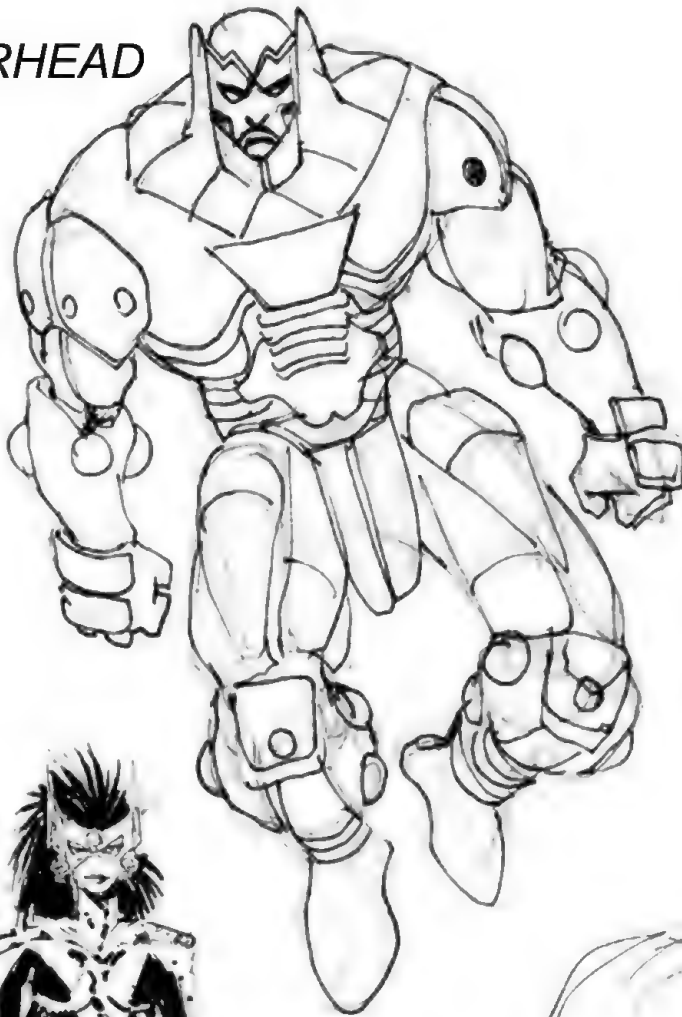
AAKON



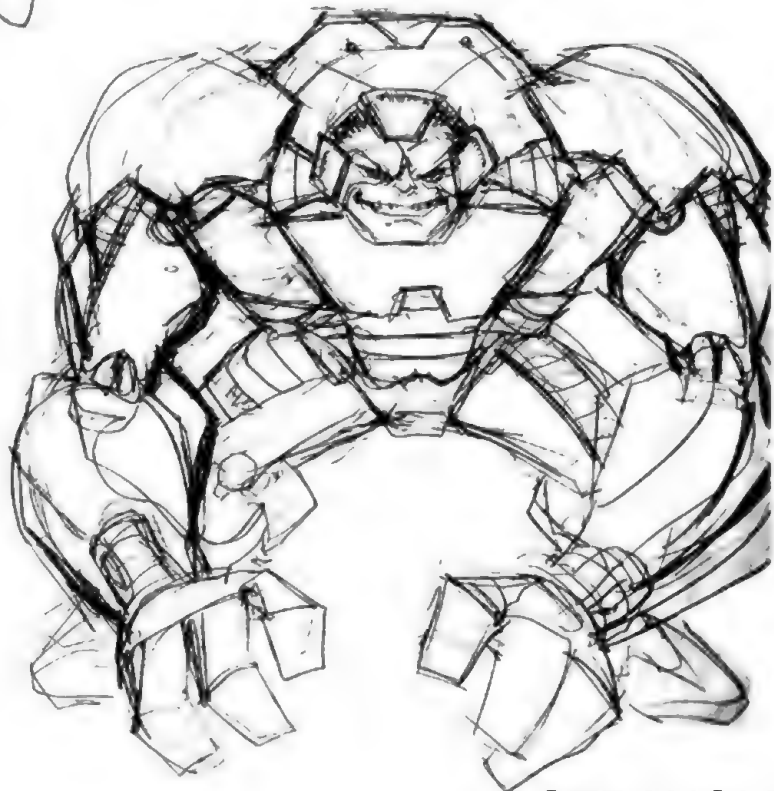
An unused costume design for Nova's second series. Note the different wristbands and the curving cut between the sleeves and torso piece. Also, the belt's new look loosely resembles a starburst pattern when viewed from the side profile.

SHATTERFORCE:

Shatterforce was a group of three superpowered beings with the codenames of Strangler, Murder and Warhead. The Shatterforce team was created by the Shadow Consortium. This Consortium was an international crime organization responsible for the global threat called Deathstorm. They were funded by the alien race known as the Aakon and were led by three individuals; The Planner, Maxoff and Thera.

WARHEAD

Original sketch layout for the cover to Nova #14 v2 (1994)

**MURDER****STRANGLER**

Behind The Art Comments
from Chris Marrinan -

"This started out as Splash page
to, I think #6, ("Time And Again"),
or #7 but I realised I made it too
big to fit all the copy that crosses
the top & bottom of (the) page,
so I just drew a whole new one
from (a) different angle, which
was published, and inked this
one in myself."



CONDOR



DEATHSTORM PROMO:

GALLERY

To help promote the Deathstorm story arc that ran in Nova #13 - #16 v2 (1994), Chris began preparing promotional art. Below is his sketchwork for the piece.



During the second and third volumes of the New Warriors, we were shown a side of Rich Rider's personality that wanted fame and glory through the entertainment industry. Below are articles that could have appeared in magazines in the Marvel Universe during those series. The first one is an entertainment report from a People/Us style magazine:

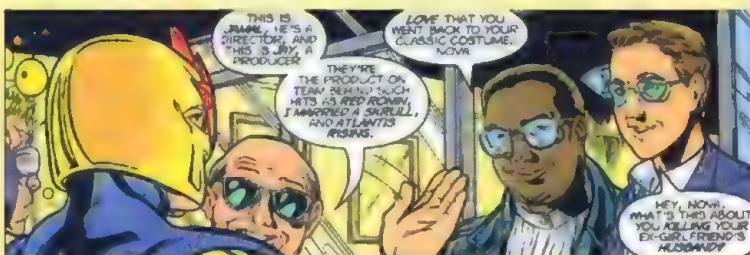
Entertainment Report

LOS ANGELES (AP) - The latest news on New Warriors: The Movie is that the project is currently undergoing revisions including a possible new script.

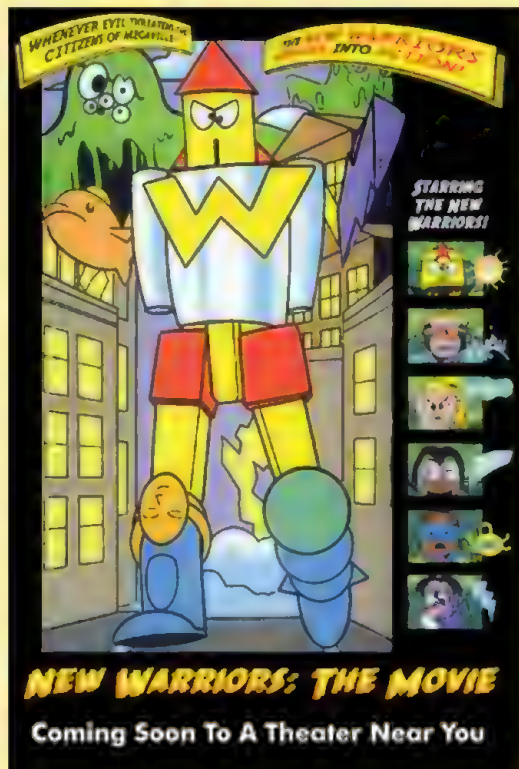
The decision to make the changes came after a meeting between the script's writers, Nova and Speedball, and the movie's production team.

An inside source reported that during the brief meeting, the two young super-heroes were shown a short demo reel put together by director Jamal Igle and producer Jay Faerber. The heroes were reportedly so upset by the demo reel that they literally flew out of the window after only ten seconds.

Their agent, Sid Stockwell, would only say that the project was "lacking something" and that changes to a movie of this magnitude are standard.



Above Photo: Movie agent Sid Stockwell introduces Nova and Speedball to 'New Warriors: The Movie' director Jamal Igle and producer Jay Faerber. Left: An undistributed movie poster



The article below is an article from the inside of MU Guide - a Marvel Universe version of TV Guide:

COVER STORY - New Warriors: Reality Check



WEDNESDAYS - 9 PM MRVL NETWORK 8 WTNH-TV

HOW THESE YOUNG SUPER-HEROES ARE SMASHING THE RATINGS!

The world of super-heroes has always been full of mystery and adventure. And now we get to see how these heroes get it done!

According to Executive Producer Zeb Wells, the goal of the program is "to find villains that have retreated into small-town America and bring them to justice".

To achieve this goal, Producer Ashley Brothers has brought the members of the New Warriors back together. With a team made up of Nova, Night Thrasher, Speedball, Namorita and new members Microbe and Debrii, the young heroes travel from city to city in their customized van fighting crime. From Fairbury, IL to Salina, KS to Smyrna, DE, viewers get to see how they work as a group and discover the friendships that bind these teammates together.

Along with capturing criminals, the New Warriors get to meet the people of the towns they save and learn that the work they do is appreciated. But the show is also loaded with action! The young heroes fight a number of dangerous super-villains along the way including Tiger Shark, Armadillo, the Super-Apes and the Corruptor.

But it's not all work and no play for the New Warriors. While the Warriors try to find a garage to repair their van, viewers get to watch Nova (pictured right) try to pick up a couple of local Kansas girls leading to the season's most hilarious moment.



ONE (NOVA) FAN'S OPINION

BY ERIK LARSEN



When I was a kid growing up there really weren't a lot of new characters.

Most every book on the racks had been going strong since before I was born. Superman, Batman, Wonder Woman, The Flash, Spider-Man, Fantastic Four, Thor, the Hulk, the Avengers. they were all well into their runs before I was able to read.

And back issues? Forget it! There were no comic book stores to be found anywhere near where I lived. I picked up my comics at Rexall Drugs in Fort Bragg, California. They weren't available in my hometown of Albion or even in the town where I attended school, Mendocino-if I wanted comic books I had to wait until the family drove to Ft. Bragg.

The funnybook bug bit hard. My Dad bought comics when he was a kid so we had stacks of his wonderful old golden age comics kicking around the house and I'd picked up a few new comics here and there but it wasn't until I was in fifth grade that I really started buying comics with gusto.

But the problem was-I never got in on the ground floor. I was always coming in late. I half remembered a bit from the old Fantastic Four cartoon. Somehow in my brain I'd managed to scramble Dr. Doom's origin with the Thing's origin and I had it in my head that Ben Grimm got horribly scarred and decided to hide his features from the world by covering himself with a large pile of orange rocks! It would be a while before somebody set me straight and I can remember thinking to myself, "What-they ALL went into space and got bombarded with Cosmic rays and yet they all got DIFFERENT superpowers? How STUPID!" (Somehow the idea of four guys getting different superpowers from the same cosmic accident seemed MORE ridiculous to me than a guy gluing orange rocks all over his body in order to keep from being ridiculed-go figure).

There really was no way for me to get the straight scoop. There were no trade paperbacks collecting early adventures and even the reprint comics that existed at the time were well into printing runs from the books far beyond the point where an origin might be found.

I wanted a character that I could call my own. A character for MY generation not my father's. Somebody whose adventures that I could follow from day one.

Enter: The Man Called NOVA!

Nova was everything I wanted from a comic! Nova was cool! Nova had this bitchin' black and gold costume and he could fly and he was strong and he was just starting out and he wasn't sure what exactly his powers were or how to use them. And it wasn't JUST that he was the ONLY new guy around and therefore the ONLY game in town-it was more than that.

Nova rocked!

And I was there from the beginning! I bought the first issue off the stands and the second and third and so on and so forth. A new comic by Marv Wolfman, John Buscema and Joe Sinnott? How could it NOT be awesome?

And in retrospect it was a little derivative. Nova's origin was a tad similar to that of Green Lantern only instead of the dying alien finding a Hal Jordan he found a Peter Parker but since I wasn't familiar with Green Lantern's origin at the time it didn't matter much to me. The Peter Parker comparison was there, sure, but where Peter was a certifiable genius, Richard Rider was anything but! Richard Rider really was an everyman (or every-teen as the case may be). He struggled in school, he was an average to poor athlete, he had girl problems galore, was bullied by bigger kids and he actually had friends! Where Peter Parker seemed to have no pals, Rich Rider had two close buddies that he'd hang out with.

And then there were the villains! Condor, Powerhouse, Diamondhead, the Corruptor, Tyrannus, Megaman and the Sphinx! And, as each villain was introduced, I was treated to their origins as well!

There was nothing not cool about Nova! And I was there from day one!

After a couple issues, Sal Buscema replaced John Buscema and Tom Palmer replaced Joe Sinnott but that was fine with me. I wasn't so pleased when Frank Giacoia replaced Tom Palmer though. Tom added a lot of flash and texture to Sal's sparse pencils and Frank didn't. Hell, Frank didn't even bother to fill in the blacks on the space sequences much of the time. But Frank was just there for a short while. A half dozen issues and Joe Sinnott was back-followed by Dick Giordano. And then Sal left and Carmine Infantino took over and with his arrival came the return of Tom Palmer! Life was good!

It was a swell book. Regardless of the ever changing art team. And more than anything-he was MY hero. Mine!

But after 25 issues (and even more shuffling of the creative team-Mike Esposito inks were a poor match with Infantino's pencils-even if it was for just one issue-yikes!) it was over. The book was cancelled and I was devastated.

There was the promise of Nova's story continuing in the pages of the Fantastic Four and they did for a short while. I even got to see Nova drawn by John Byrne, which boded well, I thought, but in short order, Nova was all but forgotten. He was left in space in the middle of some galactic skirmish and we didn't even get to see it end.

And I wasn't pleased.

A few years later, Nova's story was picked up in the pages of Rom Spaceknight. The battle ended, Richard Rider was stripped of his powers and was sent home.

And I was pissed.

That was a sorry send off to a character that I knew and loved.

He appeared next in an issue of What If and then he didn't show up for years.

Sigh.

So, I broke into comics. I'd been drawing the Doom Patrol over at DC and Marvel tapped me on the shoulder and I came running. I took on the Punisher and it was a struggle. The Punisher was NOT a character that I took to. I wanted to draw BIG superheroes-big action! Guys knocking each other through walls and the Punisher? He shot guys. And if he was in a fight it had to be played realistic and I was not a guy that wanted to play by those kinds of rules.

At some point, I decided that I wanted to write in addition to drawing and so I pitched a little five-part serial to Marvel Comics Presents editor Terry Kavanagh featuring-you guessed it-the Man Called Nova.

The pitch was accepted.

I bid the Punisher goodbye.

And then it all fell apart.

It seemed that Nova was already being revived elsewhere. Soon, Tom DeFalco and Ron Frenz reintroduced Nova as a member of the New Warriors over in the pages of Thor and that meant that my story no longer fit in the big scheme of things. In a short while the New Warriors got their own title and Fabian Nicieza and Mark Bagley got to chronicle the character's further adventures.

And I hated it.

First, Nova got a horrible new costume (one of a string of horrible new Nova costumes-and they're STILL f***ing with it to this day) and second-Rich Rider looked and sounded nothing like the Rich Rider that I grew up with. The letters pages backed me up. Nova fans hated Fabian's take on the character!

But time went on and soon there were more New Warriors reader than Nova readers and those Nova readers that did stick in through grudgingly accepted Nova's abrupt personality overhaul, his ponytail and his beard stubble.

But I was long gone.

I ended up drawing an Excalibur serial for Marvel Comics Presents instead of the Nova serial. I was no fan of Excalibur but having left the Punisher and having had Nova pulled out from under my feet, I was in no position to be choosy. The Excalibur serial lead to the Amazing Spider-Man, another book that I felt ill suited to work on but at least it was a book that I had enjoyed at one point and it was, as they say, a "good gig."

Now, I like Fabian.

I was not a big fan of his handling of Nova in the New Warriors but a fellow human being, I find him to be an amicable chap. We get along well and we've conversed at times about Nova.

I wasn't going to make the Amazing Spider-Man my life's work. I enjoyed the book a great deal, make no mistake, but having had the opportunity to draw most of Spidey's extensive rogues gallery at least once and several of them more than once, I was determined to do something else with my life. I'd already gotten some writing work. I'd written and drawn a Spider-Man/Wolverine story for Marvel Comics Presents and that was pretty well received but I didn't want to do more Spider-Man.

What I wanted to do was Nova.

Now, I'd talked to Fabian at length about the character and I told him a number of ideas that I had in mind for the character. So I put in a pitch for an ongoing Nova series and I waited and waited.

Out of work at that point, I took on a few inking jobs, determined to teach myself how to ink. I inked a Namor annual and a Human Torch story for Marvel Comics Presents (over Steve Ditko's pencils, no less). Eventually, I took on a run on the adjective-less Spider-Man book that Todd McFarlane had started. I even managed to stick Nova into the mix, prepping readers for, what I was convinced would be, the greatest run on any comic book-ever!

And then Nova was approved!

As a miniseries.



So, I put it off.

The Image Comics thing looked like it might be a worthwhile venture and since Nova was just a miniseries, I reasoned that it could wait until after I did a miniseries over at Image first.

But there was no looking back. Savage Dragon was an immediate hit and my own creation, which meant I could do whatever I wanted with him and that meant that if I wanted to do an ongoing book, by George, I could do an ongoing book!

Fabian and I had, at one point, pitched an idea to take over X-Factor and we'd worked on a few ideas for that. I'd stuck in a character that I'd created as a kid and I'd done, what I thought was, a pretty cool redesign of a character called the Crimson Commando. We were proposing shortening his name to Commando and turning him into a cyborg.

We didn't land the assignment.

I was going to introduce the new, improved Commando anyway in my Spider-Man story but the editor balked at having a flag-faced character shooting up a shopping mall so I hastily redesigned the character and changed his name to Cyborg-X. Perceptive readers may note that the dialogue he spouts is directly lifted from a string of back up stories Fabian wrote in which the Crimson Commando lost his limbs.

Following my Spider-Man run, I took the original Commando design that I'd come up with for X-Factor, removed the scrawled "X" from his chest and turned him into an updated version of a Captain America knockoff that I created as a kid. You may recognize him as a character called SuperPatriot.

In any case, in exchange for Fabian's suggestion, which helped me create the SuperPatriot design, I let Fabian run with whatever ideas I'd had for Nova in a new Nova mag.

And, sure enough, they let Fabian do an ongoing series.

That series went along just fine. And over the course of it, Nova became just a bit more like the Nova that I loved as a kid. And then it ended as well. But over in the New Warriors a similar change took place. Over a number of issues, Nova started looking and acting more like Nova again. The latest variation on the costume was ditched and the ponytail and beard stubble were ditched as well and by the time that book came to its end-Nova was Nova once more.

And he was gone-again.

Years later, I was dabbling in writing other books. I was still perpetrating Savage Dragon but I'd taken on a couple assignments to stretch my creative muscles and try to get my name out there some more. I'd taken on Aquaman and I was writing Wolverine and at some point somebody suggested that I dust off an old pitch that I'd submitted years ago and see if it fared any better this time out.



It did.

And Nova was given his third shot at an ongoing series.

And I had a ball!

I did everything I wanted to immediately. I had ALL of Nova's major villains appear one after another plus had a few guest stars and tossed in a few new characters and played around with others. I turned Namorita back from the fish-faced dog that she'd been turned into and set things in motion to radically transform Diamondhead into the baddest badass ever!

It was the most fun I had ever writing for Marvel!

And New Warriors readers hated it.

(Okay, maybe not all of them, I'm prone to hyperbole, but it sure seemed like it was all of 'em at the time).

Having become accustomed to Fabian's version of Nova (and having stopped reading the New Warriors or Nova's previous mag, following Fabian's departure) New Warriors readers were not all that taken with me "turning back the clock" and making Nova a "fun character" again. With the advent of a disastrous New Warrior re-launch in which Nova (and the entire New Warriors crew) got god awful new outfits, the writing was on the wall. The New Warriors was weak, sure, but the market was unwilling to support two Warriors books so Nova went away after a brief seven issue run and the New Warriors fizzled out with issue #10.

And that was all she wrote.

Nova has appeared a few times since-always in a different costume-always one that looked worse than the last. And I've tried my best to ignore it all.

Sigh.

But for that one shining moment-that brief run-Nova was mine! And it was f***ing sweet!

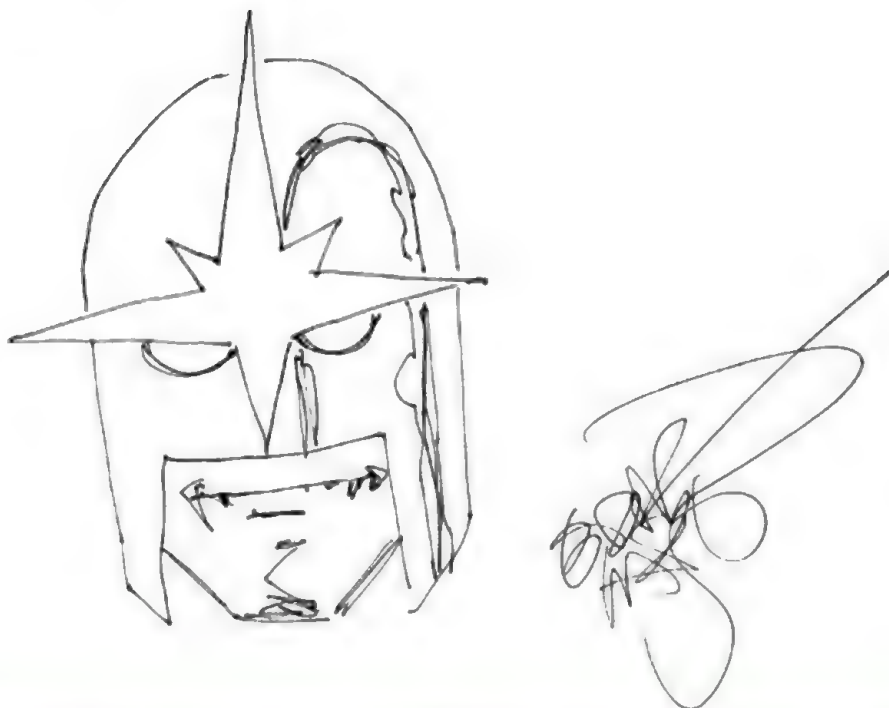
But that's just one fan's opinion. I'm willing to concede that I could be wrong.

If you want to read the real Nova, please give the Essential Nova a gander. It collects NOVA #1-25, AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #171 and MARVEL TWO-IN-ONE ANNUAL #3. It features a lot of great comics and maybe, just maybe, it'll stir the blood of some other youngster who'll fall in love with that character and that costume and compel them to continue the adventures of Nova, the Human Rocket.

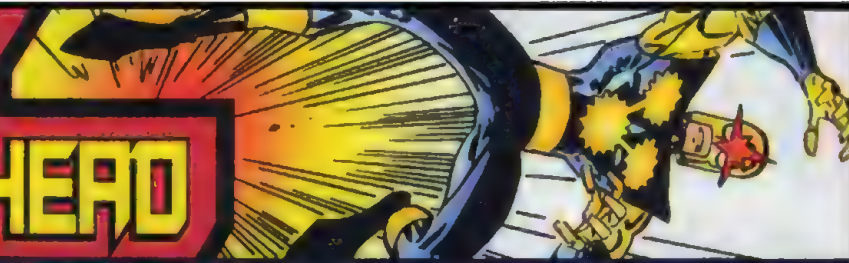
We should be so lucky!

-Erik Larsen
Savage Dragon perpetrator

www.savagedragon.com
www.imagecomics.com



BLAST IT TO BUCKETHEAD



Readers, you hold in your hands the last issue of Nova's third shot at an ongoing series — as hard as we tried, this title simply wasn't as big a hit as hoped for, so it's off to funnybook limbo for a while.

Nova's adventures will continue to be chronicled in the pages of the New Warriors and if readers demand it — we may be back! For now, however,

nemesis, Brent, I hope you got a kick out of seeing Venom look horns with our own battlin' Bucket-Head in this very issue!

Dear Erik and Marvel,

There's a lot of bickering about NOVA being cancelled, who's to blame and all that, but that's all moot, really. Rather than complain, let's look at

on the lettering chores (for the first handful of issues) and the nice, organic colors of Steve Oliff and NOVA became just as much a joy to LOOK at as it was to READ.

So, while it didn't last long, the Human Rocket really blasted off and soared for the duration. Good work, everyone. I wish the staff nothing but the best. Take care and I'll do the same.

I've been collecting comics for about 21 years give or take. However the actual act of becoming interested in the genre was purely accidental; so to was my eventual love for the Man called Nova. I'd always as a kid been interested in science fiction; Doctor Who, Star Trek, classic films like Forbidden Planet..list is endless. Anyway a friend of mine was having a clear-out in his attic and he gave me a pile of Marvel Comics; mostly British re-prints of American strips. Most were a black and white magazine called "Mighty World of Marvel!" And one issue immediately caught my eye. Its featured ROM Spaceknight in a story called "No Place Like Home" But it wasn't Rom that piqued my curiosity; it was another character, a Earth hero wearing a helmet with a distinct pointed star on the front. I liked his attitude, his powers.. Problem though was only half the story was printed in the issue and so I didn't know how Nova would deal with the invading Skrulls (whoever they were,) and I WANTED TO KNOW!

So began my long quest to find more about Nova and his alter-ego Richard Rider. Patience prevailed. I soon found a copy of Man Called Nova No 6, and hunted down most of Vol. 1 (still missing No. 25 though!). Struck gold when I found ROM No. 24 and found out how the story concluded..BUT SHOCK HORROR..he'd had his powers stripped from him! Just as I was beginning to learn about Rich, his friends and his wacky villains, he'd been moth-balled! Fortunately though New Warriors arrived and I was re-acquainted though it took some time to get used to the harder ££\$!!! Rich; character traits which have recently been brought back to the fore in Annihilation.

Nova kinda reminds me about myself a lot. The underdog who in time became a great achiever..a hero that most people can relate to in one way or another. I could go on and tell you my favorite stories but in all fairness I don't have many that I don't totally dislike. Art-wise; well to be Sal Buscema drew my personal favorite rendition of Nova; Mark Bagley a close second but Andrea Di-Vito and Ken Walker are also well up there. I'm looking forward to the new monthly under D & A; especially as it will combine both my love of Nova and Sci-fi. Also better not forget Nova Prime Page; best website on the Net! Kudos to Doug for producing it and hope it continues for another 20 years; just as I hope Nova stays around to celebrate his Golden Anniversary in 2025!

Darren Blackburn (aka Nova3333) U.K.

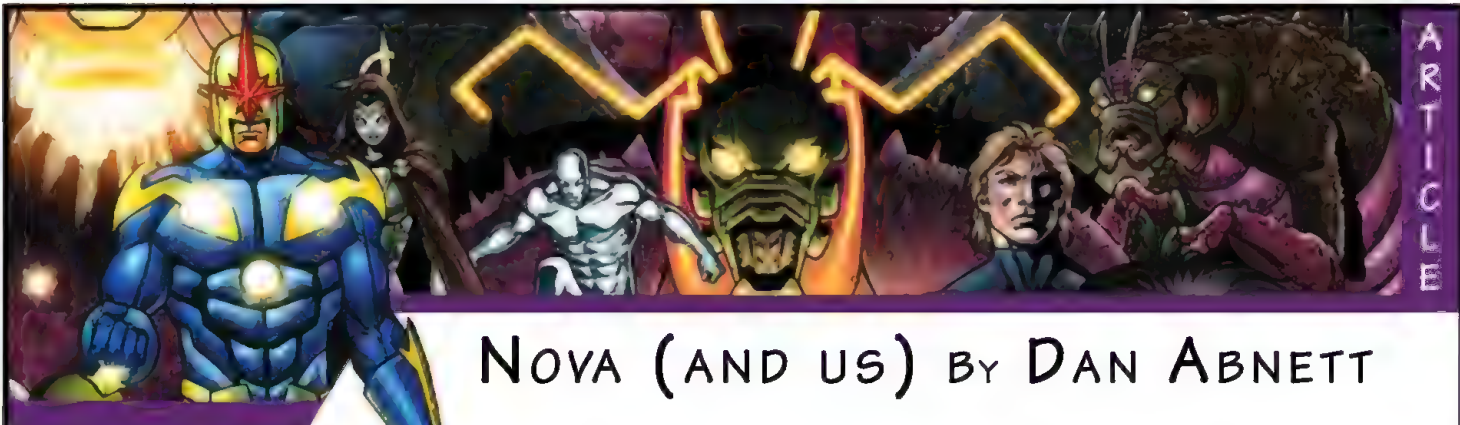
Nova is the greatest super-hero since Spider-Man. 'Nuff Said! - Roberto Guedes



THE MAN CALLED NOVA



Art by Pierre Villeneuve



NOVA (AND US) BY DAN ABNETT

Artwork from Nova Corps
Files & Annihilation: Nova #2 (2006)

Last year, I was invited - along with my partner in crime, Andy Lanning - to write the new Nova mini series. It's nice when it happens like that. Andy and I have a pretty good track record when it comes to sci-fi/cosmic heroes, and I think it was our long run on DC's Legion of Superheroes that made Marvel think of us.

It also helped that Andy and I had tried to get a Nova project going once before. Again, it's that cosmic connection. We fancied approaching Marvel with something, and Nova was, at the time, their only cosmic hero not being developed or published.

We pitched a series that showed the Nova Corp very much like a galactic police force. Not so much cosmic warriors as cosmic peacekeepers. We developed the inner structure of the Corp, and some new support characters, and the excellent Chris Batista (on board as prospective artist) worked out some gorgeous costume designs that showed rank and role differences. The series would have been about Richard as an outsider, leaving Earth to take on his 'space cop' responsibilities for the cosmos as a whole, and having a hard time fitting in inside a 'sector house' full of institutionalised (and alien) bigotry and xenophobia.

With a big cosmos-threatening plot thrown in, of course.

It wasn't to be. It happens that way too, sometimes. But the pitch at least had left an impression deep enough for us to get a call when Nova resurfaced. Nova was going to launch in a mini series as part of the Annihilation event, a huge cross-book storyline that would shake up the cosmic parts of the Marvel Universe. The clue to the threat was in the title (Annihilus, anyone? Anyone?). Annihilation was being 'masterminded' by the legendary Keith Giffen, and what he had in mind for Nova left precious little room for the development we'd done before.

But we have had a blast doing it. The series is going down well. Good critical notices. Joe Q likes it, which is always nice to know. Chris Batista wasn't available at the time we went to work, but we prevailed upon the amazing talents of Kev Walker, and just look what he did (along with inker Rick Magyar and colorist Brian Reber). We've also enjoyed the creative back and forth with our talented and sensitive editor Andy Schmidt (Andy... that was how you wanted to be known, right? Talented and sensitive?). Anyway, it's been a pleasure to work on.



Doug (who you must know, if you're reading this) runs the Nova Prime Page, the nexus and singularity of all Nova fans. And he asked me to 'write him something' about our Nova experiences.

So, okay, here goes. I've got something to get off my chest. I, uh...I wasn't a Nova fan.

There. I said it out loud (sorry Doug). Andy Lanning has a similar confession to make.

You see, the thing is, we were young enough to read Nova when he first appeared. Nova was created to be a young, teen-identifiable hero, a next generation Spiderman. Nothing wrong with that, nothing wrong with the character itself, it's just he didn't seem to have that indefinable 'something' that makes the difference between good and great.

Nova was okay, but he seemed a bit... naff. ('Naff' is a British expression - it's softer than a word I wouldn't dream of printing here, and stronger than, you know, pap. It means the also rans, the almosts, the sidekicks and the throw aways... Speedball -- I'm thinking of you, mate).

What I'm saying is that Andy and I hadn't grown up with a burning desire, one day, to write Nova. Our pitch for Nova had been based on a simple, professional decision to find a character that suited our styles and interests. That cosmic thing, I mentioned. We saw in Nova a character that we could do things with.

But what things? If Nova was the epitome of the weaker (no, let's say 'less strong') Marvel characters, how do you turn that around? Funnily enough, that's where the fact that we'd never been real fans became our secret weapon.

We approached Nova, trying to define why it was we'd never liked him as much as Spidey. Why wasn't he cool in the same way? That's when we saw it: Nova has always been written and portrayed as if, somehow, he KNOWS he's not great. He comes across as a guy who thoroughly believes himself to be second or third tier.

But that was odd. Look at his pedigree, his powers, his potential, his calling. Cosmic peacekeeper? Gravimetric powers? Vast alien tech as back up? Nova should be A grade, first tier amongst Earth's mightiest. The problem with Nova was that he had always seen HIMSELF as a naff character.

So that gave us our angle. Imagine what it would be like if you actually met him, and saw his powers in action. He'd be amazing. We wrote him as if there was absolutely no question he was cool. And we used his self-doubt as a character trait. We decided to make Richard face up to his hang-ups that he was second rate.

Hope we've done him proud. I'd like to think so. Oh, and just to be clear... now I've got to know him better, I'm definitely a Nova fan.

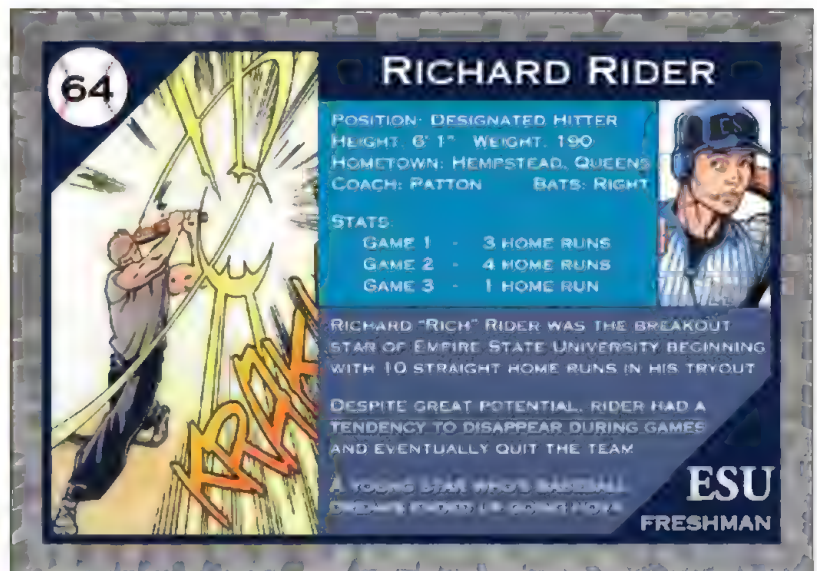


BONUS TRADING CARD!



During Nova's third series by Erik Larsen in 1999, Richard Rider reluctantly gave in to his friend Roger "Caps" Cooper's pleas to join the Empire State University's baseball team in order to meet women.

Despite his success on the team, Rich continued to feel guilty using his powers for his own personal gain. Eventually, college baseball ruled it illegal for people with super powers to play the game after Brian Hibbs (the Kangaroo) was discovered playing baseball. Rich gladly quit the team immediately after the new rule went into effect.



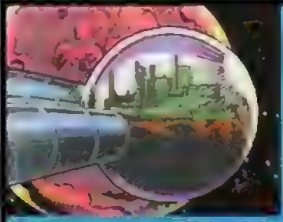


★★★★ JOIN THE ★★★★★

UNITED FRONT

SAVE THE UNIVERSE!

Art by Butch Mapa



XANDAR

AN ENCYCLOPEDIA GALACTICA ENTRY BY BRANDON SEIFERT

Xandar

Throughout the known universe, there was no planet like Xandar (population 12 billion).

Peaceful, enlightened and highly advanced, protected by a small army of superhumans, Xandar's citizenry continued to contribute to their society even after their deaths. In death, a Xandarian's brain was removed, and placed into the Worldmind, a vast living computer system that kept a complete record of the planet's art, history, and culture, as well as the personal history of each of its natives. Located in the Tranta System, Xandar was the proudest planet in the Andromeda Galaxy.

Even the destruction of their homeworld didn't end Xandarian civilization; the Xandarians just transformed the surviving cities into a new artificial planetoid. The entire populace was slaughtered, but the storage of their brains inside the Worldmind and their advanced cloning technology let the entire society be resurrected. Ultimately, it took both the death of the entire populace again and the destruction of the artificial Xandar Cluster to end Xandarian civilization.

GOVERNMENT & SOCIETY

Xandar's governmental structure is somewhat unclear. The society appears to be a monarchy, presumably a constitutional monarchy, headed by a queen. Xandar is also apparently suzerainty – a pseudo-feudal system where individual regions have limited autonomy but answer to a central authority, like the Holy Roman Empire. The queen is also referred to as the Prime Commandant of the StarCorps, a title that may be equivalent to the President of the United States being the Commander in Chief of the U.S. armed forces.

Queen Adora is the most recent and only known queen; a rather brash young woman, she was took up arms against the Skrulls rather than fleeing to safety and has been shown to be caring and passionate about her people.

Likewise, little is known about Xandarian society. It's apparently a caste-based system, but how much mobility between castes exists is unclear – a member of the lower caste, Pyreus Kril, managed to get into the Xandarian Space Academy through hard work.

Xandarians use epithets like 'thank the gods,' implying a polytheistic religion; one of these gods may be the Great Target.



Worldmind

Other galactic civilizations like the Kree and the Skrulls have built artificial minds out of the brains of their deceased leaders. The Kree Empire was even ruled by the Supreme Intelligence, an artificial mind made out of the brains of their greatest statesmen and philosophers. Xandar, however, believes that every person has valuable knowledge, and stores the brains of every dead Xandarian inside their fabled "Living Computers," the Worldmind.

The Worldmind preserves the minds and consciousnesses of individual Xandarians, as well as the history, philosophy, arts, sciences and technology of Xandar as a whole. The Worldmind is said to be 10 million years old (compared to the Supreme Intelligence, which is only one million years old), and its combined knowledge has advanced Xandarian civilization "in ways others could hardly dream," according to Xandar's leaders.

The Worldmind preserves the brains themselves of dead Xandarian, holding them inside steel-chromide cylinders inside the Hub, the physical structure of the Worldmind, inside Xandar's Orienta Main Shard. The brains can apparently be transferred into mobile units shaped like brains with spider-legs, and when the physical Worldmind itself was destroyed, its operating system and all its stored knowledge was encoded into the Nova-Force and uploaded into the last surviving member of the StarCorps.

In previous times, the Worldmind seemed to be simply Xandar's computer system, a receptacle of knowledge curated by a 'keeper' with the title Prime Thoran.

More recently, the Worldmind has been presented as Xandar's main guiding force, and described as the political and spiritual leader of Xandar and the StarCorps. It also functioned as the primary source of energy and power on Xandar, an inexhaustible power source and one that it would be sacrilegious to use for war.

Nonetheless, the last known Prime Thoran, Thorul Rul, went before the Consensus Voice of the Worldmind for the power to save the Xandar Cluster when it was being invaded by the Skrulls. The Worldmind granted Rul vast powers and, calling himself the Protector, he led the StarCorps into battle against the Skrulls until the end of the war. During this time Rul had access to all the knowledge of the Worldmind, but Xandar was left without access to its information during the time he was off world. After Rul was killed by Nebula alongside the rest of Xandar, his personality became the primary user interface between Xandar and the Worldmind, although that appears to have been temporary.

STARCORPS/NOVA CORPS

Most galactic civilizations have large armies, often supplemented a few elites squads of super-soldiers. Xandar, on the other hand, had a smaller standing army composed entirely of super-soldiers, the StarCorps.

The members of the StarCorps, more commonly known as the Nova Corps, were imbued with an energy matrix called the Nova-Force, which gave them a variety of superhuman powers. The StarCorps seemed to be divided into two major divisions – the Novas, who were superhumanly strong and durable and could fly in an atmosphere or in space, and the Syfons, who could absorb energy, and use it to make themselves stronger and tougher, or release it as blasts of energy. For whatever reason, the StarCorps have been mistaken for an interstellar police force, but they were traditionally Xandar's military, exploratory force, and intelligence operative, concerned with protecting Xandar (and the planets under Xandar's umbrella) from outside threats rather than with enforcing the rule of law.

History

The StarCorps is said to have started as Xandar's militia, which may mean the Nova-Force was only portioned out in times of emergency.

At some point the StarCorps became a standing army, with 500 super-powered Xandarians as well as other support personnel and an expeditionary force that did not seem to possess the Nova-Force. After Zorr destroyed the planet Xandar and the surviving cities reoriented themselves into the Xandar Cluster, the StarCorps was expanded to 5,000 troops.

The Corps was again reorganized after Xandarian civilization was rebuilt following Nebula's decimation of the populace. The bulk of the StarCorps continued to protect Xandar, but single Nova Corps members were assigned to protect individual star systems in the Andromeda and Milky Way galaxies that'd been ravaged by war or piracy. No Syfon Warriors have been seen since Nebula's assault on Xandar, which may mean they were phased out.

The Corps has fought extensive battles with the Skrull Empire, and are said to have had many campaigns against the Badoon and Dire Wraiths as well.

When the Annihilation Wave attacked Xandar, the entire StarCorps were wiped out, with the exception of Rich Rider. Rider now carries the entire Nova-Force, as well as the legacy of the StarCorps.

Rank

The Nova Corps has five major ranks. The lowest ranked members of the Corps are called Corpsman, and the highest-ranked members are the Centurion Primes. Between those ranks are the Millennians, Denarians, and Centurions. The head of the StarCorps has traditionally been the First Centurion Prime, although Rich Rider held the rank in his time as the protector of the Sol System without leading the Corps.

The Syfon Warriors are an elite unit removed from the usual Nova Corps hierarchy, but ranked just below Centurion Prime as far as the chain of command goes.

StarCorps rank is denoted in two places on Corps members' uniforms – in the red crest on the soldier's helmet, and in the number of 'starbursts' on their chest. The difference in power levels between the ranks is unclear, but it seems that Centurion Primes and Syfon Warriors are the only ones able to release gravimetric pulses. Primes are said to hold the largest portion of the Nova-Force that a mortal being can wield without risking intoxication and corruption by the power.



Powers

The Nova-Force gives every Nova the powers of flight, super-strength, superhuman durability, and a connection to the Worldmind. Higher-ranked Novas are also able to absorb certain forms of energy and release it in the form of force blasts called gravimetric pulses and as bursts of electromagnetic static, and can open Star Gates with the energy as well.

Syfans can absorb energy, both from energy-based attacks and the electrical energy powering machinery and living creatures they are in physical contact with. They can use the absorbed energy to increase their physical strength and durability, and can release it in energy blasts, presumably the same gravimetric pulses as a Nova Prime.

Novas fly by moving along the paths of electrons in an atmosphere or in space. They can reach faster than light speeds by tapping the electrons of a star going nova, but otherwise they are restricted to sub-light speeds.

The Worldmind and Xandarian communication technology can place information directly into the mind of a StarCorps officer, including flight plans and the answers to math problems. Some information is provided subconsciously to all members; Rider, for instance, was intuitively familiar with the layout and operation of Xandarian vessels before he ever had direct contact with Xandar itself. Corps members can also receive one-way telepathic briefings while they're unconscious, with both visuals and audio; in various situations Rhomann Dey, Queen Adora and the Worldmind briefed Rich Rider while he was knocked out. The Worldmind also apparently regulates the amount of power Corps members have access to, and only authorized full power levels in extreme emergency situations.

The Xandarian Heralds of Galactus

Xandar's StarCorps is known for protecting sentient worlds against alien menaces. The dark irony is that not one but two of the Heralds of Galactus were formed StarCorps soldiers.

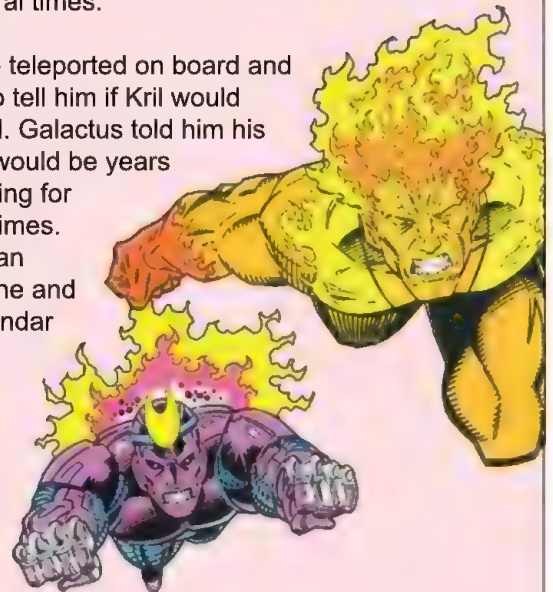
Galactus' Heralds Air-Walker and Firelord were both serving in the Xandarian Space Corps when they were recruited by the Devourer of Worlds. Gabriel Lan was the captain of the Way-Opener and Pyreus Kril was his first mate. The Way-Opener was an exploratory scow, the smallest, oldest, most-rebuilt and least prestigious ship in Xandar's fleet, and it was quite a controversy when Lan, the most-decorated war hero on Xandar, took a post on it. Kril, who idolized Lan, took the second-in-command position straight out of the Space Academy, and the two served together for several years before they encounter Galactus' Worldship.

Galactus was in need of a new Herald to replace the Silver Surfer, and abducted Lan to offer him the position. Lan agreed, and was transformed into Air-Walker. He served Galactus well until he was killed defending his master from a fleet of Ovoids. Galactus placed his essence in a cosmic-powered robot, but the robot lacked Lan's passion, and Galactus dispatched it. The robot would be destroyed and rebuilt several times.

Kril pursued Galactus and eventually caught up with the Worldship. He teleported on board and demanded to know what'd happened to his friend. Galactus agreed to tell him if Kril would become his new Herald. Kril agreed, and was transformed into Firelord. Galactus told him his friend's fate, and then stripped away all memory of his previous life; it would be years before Firelord would remember his old life. Firelord soon tired of working for Galactus, though he's returned to his former master's service several times. He pursued Nebula to get revenge on her for slaughtering the Xandarian population and encountered Garthan Saal as Supernova twice before he and Air-Walker aided Saal, Rich Rider and the New Warriors in bringing Xandar back to life.

When the Annihilation Wave invaded our universe, they destroyed the Xandar Cluster specifically to draw out Firelord and Air-Walker, so Annihilus could experiment on them to learn about the power cosmic. Annihilus' soldiers destroyed Air-Walker again, while Firelord joined the United Front against the Wave and helped bring about the Wave's defeat.

It's possible that Xandar's initial destruction also directly stemmed from the Xandarian Heralds of Galactus. Luphom was destroyed in the same timeframe that Air-Walker and Firelord were serving Galactus, so Zorr may have chosen Xandar as one of his targets partially out of a desire for revenge on the Herald who led Galactus to his world.



Uniform

StarCorps members wear battlesuits that appear to be made of very light cloth, but protect them from the vacuum of space, intense heat, physical impact and energy blasts. The substance of the battlesuit can morph, sealing breaches in itself or assuming a different configuration, and can change its color, texture, elasticity and appearance. The helmet collapses from a rigid metallic compound to fabric when it's removed, and the entire battlesuit can be dispelled to another dimension through its tesseract release, and retrieved at any time, swapping places with the wearer's other clothing.

The battlesuits are designed to channel the Nova-Force, and some abilities, like releasing a gravimetric pulse, are very difficult without the battlesuit.

The suit protects against lack of oxygen (underwater, in space and in situations of extreme cold, but not automatically under poison gas attacks), closing up and providing six hours of breathable air.

A variety of sensory-enhancement technologies are built into the Corps battlesuit. The helmet's lenses are coated to see all spectra of light, including cloaked Xandarian starships, and can zoom in on distant targets and analyze energy sources to see if a Prime can absorb them. Rich Rider has also been able to tap into a radar-like motion detector, but he had to concentrate to do it.

The helmet's communications systems cover everything from Earth's police band radio to sub-etheric real-time video conferencing across galaxies. The Worldmind can project visual information on the visor array, including an avatar of itself, and auditory pick-ups let the Worldmind listen to the surrounding environment.

Xandarian authorities can also monitor the wearer's bio-pattern, detecting physical injury, psychological shock and adrenal surges, and calculates the wearer's combat efficiency. The suit can also tinker with the wearer's biochemistry, modulating their endorphin levels, administering adrenal inhibitors or neural pacifiers, and healing the Corps member's body at an accelerated rate.

There's a detachable computer built into the belt, and a digital music catalog in the helmet that can be triggered intentionally or subconsciously.

TECHNOLOGY

Xandar's officials claimed their world had technology "more advanced than any planet's," and considering the level of sophistication they've demonstrated, it may well be true.

Tesseracts and Dimensional Technology

A tesseract is a warp in the fabric of reality, usually to remove an object from being accessed by the rest of the universe (as if it'd been removed from our dimension), or to create spaces that are larger inside than the physical space they occupy could allow.

On Xandar, this technology was mostly seen to be used for storing clothing – a set of garments would be stored in a tesseract until needed, at which point it would shift into normal space, appearing on someone's body. The battlesuits StarCorps members wear can be invoked or dispelled through a tesseract.

Every StarCorps ship has a device called a 'Dimensional Phaser,' an emergency measure that jettisoned the crew into another dimension until they could be rescued, according to Rich Rider's description. It's possible the Phaser jettisoned them into a tesseract instead.

Cloning

Xandar possesses a mass cloning system, which they used to resurrect their entire population from DNA records after Nebula exterminated the populace. Clones can be fast grown to full maturity in under a day, after which they are presumably implanted with the stored brains of their deceased progenitor, or at least the progenitor's memories.

How much this system is used is unknown. The technology would seem like it would mostly eliminate death as a lasting problem on Xandar, yet the actions of Adora and other demonstrate that Xandarians are still scared of death and of losing loved ones. Xandarian society may have ethical issues with achieving immortality through cloning, which may be why they limit its use.

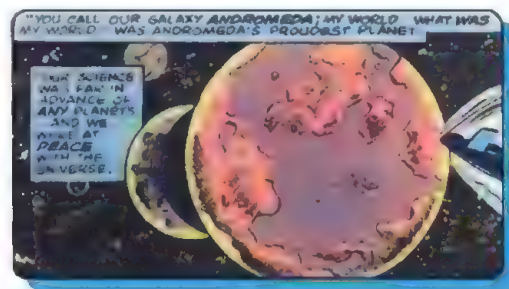


Did You Know?...Xandar's Queen Adora was married to Tanak Valt? Valt was a Centurion in the Nova Corps and became Rich Rider's successor as Centurion Nova Prime after Rich returned to Earth following the Skrull/Xandar War in Rom #24.

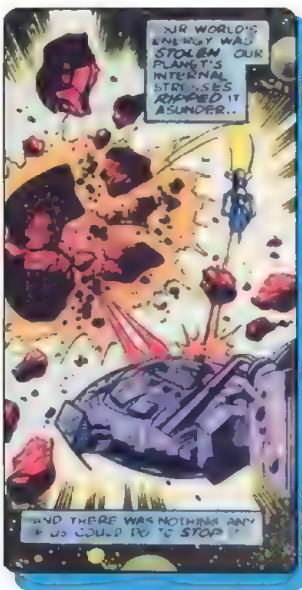
HISTORY

Precious little is known about Xandar's history before the Modern Era, but it's known Xandarian civilization is roughly as old as other major galactic civilizations.

The Worldmind, the collection of the brains of dead Xandarians, is said to be 10 million years old. 10 million years ago was around the beginning of the Kree-Skrull War. At this time, the Skrull Empire was based on trade rather than subjugation, so the Andromeda Galaxy at the time of Xandar's rise to technological civilization was probably very different than it is today.



At some point, Xandar established a sprawling empire, built on blood and pain. Nonetheless, Xandar describes themselves as being "at peace with the universe," so the blood and pain that built their empire may have been their own. Their empire survived until the Modern Era, but by the time Nebula slaughtered Xandar's populace, no colony worlds seem to have been left.



Warlord Zorr and the (First) Destruction of Xandar

Xandar had a population of two billion people when interstellar tyrant Warlord Zorr attacked it.

Zorr's homeworld Lumphom was militant and warlike, until Galactus drained the planet's energy and killed its population. The only Lumphomoids who survived were those who were pillaging other planets, and Zorr was one of them. Zorr vowed to resurrect his dead world by repowering it with geothermal energy stolen from other planets, and he made Xandar his first target.

Zorr attacked Xandar in a starship several miles long, destroying their fleet and panicking the population before draining the planet's core. The geological pressures tore Xandar apart. Rhomann Dey, the leader of the StarCorps, used Xandar's flagship to drive Zorr off, and pursued him throughout the galaxies, thinking Xandar was dead.

Surprisingly, the destruction of the planet wasn't the end of Xandarian civilization. Earth's Watcher Uatu secretly intervened, because Xandar was destined to have a role in saving the entire universe. Uatu surrounded Xandar's four largest cities in spherical force fields, which preserved their atmospheres and protected them from the planet's explosion. The cities survived as asteroids, and the surviving Xandarian populace (aided by the populations of all

their colony worlds, perhaps?) spent the next two years connecting the shards together with vast tubes to create the Xandar Cluster.

Each shard was re-zoned to server a single function: Mining, farming, manufacturing, or housing Xandar's populace. Xandarians quickly adapted to their new world, to the point that Queen Adora declared it "the most ideal world of all."

The Xandar-Skrull War

Xandar is said to have been at peace with the rest of the universe, with a single exception – the Skrull Empire.

Over the last 1,000 years, the Skrulls invaded Xandar many times, most recently a century before the Modern Era. After the final war, the Skrulls and Xandar signed a treaty called the Treaty of Fornax. Apparently that was the last contact between the two civilizations for a century, and even members of the Xandarian military had trouble recognizing Skrulls until recent years.

While Zorr was shattering Xandar, the Skrulls were losing their ancient war with the Kree. They needed a new source of energy to continue the fight, and targeted the Xandarian Worldmind, perceiving Xandarian civilization weakened by Zorr and the reconstruction after his attack.

Shortly after the completion of the Xandar Cluster's initial configuration, the Skrulls attacked en masse without warning, using wave attacks to destroy Xandar's production capabilities. They would've conquered Xandar if the Fantastic Four hadn't arrived to fight them, soon accompanied by more reinforcements from Earth – the results of Rhomann Dey's vendetta against Zorr.

Dey had pursued Zorr to numerous worlds, the last of which was Earth. Along the way Dey had sustained fatal injuries, and he transferred his Nova-Force to a random human, hoping a new Nova Centurion would continue the fight against Zorr.

Rider became the hero Nova, and months later one of his enemies press ganged Rider and several of his allies and enemies into crewing Dey's Primeship for a return to Xandar. On Xandar, Rider and his comrades joined the fight against the Skrulls as the New Champions, an extra unit in Xandar's War with the Skrulls.



Unknown to Xandar, Diamondhead, a “former” supervillain who fought alongside the Champions, betrayed his team to the Skrulls. The Skrulls used the Champions’ ship as a Trojan horse to get onboard the Corps’ flagship, which they used as an even larger Trojan horse to infiltrate Xandar. On Diamondhead’s orders, the Corps and Champions were held as hostages inside the ship’s Dimensional Phaser, a safety device that ejects the crew into a safe pocket dimension.

Nebula and the (Second) Destruction of Xandar

The space pirate Nebula stole Sanctuary II, the warship of Thanos the mad Titan. With it she intended to conquer the fragmented Skrull Empire. But first she turned it on Xandar.

Nebula told Xandar she was attacking them because they were “in the way.” Later she would claim she didn’t remember why she attacked, but “it seemed like a good idea at the time.”



Eventually the truth came out: Zorr had been Nebula's father, and her attack on Xandar was revenge for his death. She may have hidden the truth because at the time she attacked Xandar, Nebula was claiming to be Thanos' granddaughter and may have wanted to hide her true parentage.

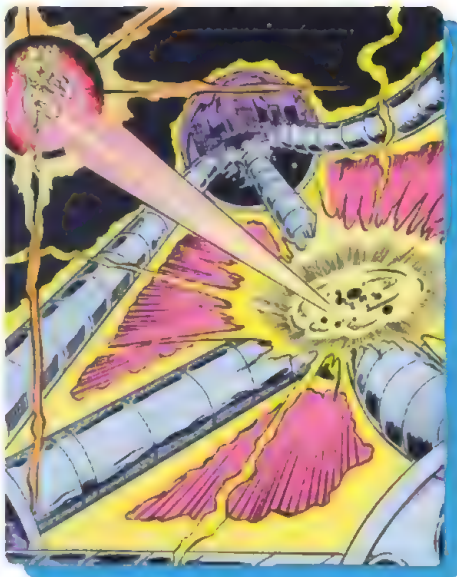
Even with its citizenry exterminated, Xandar would live on.

Queen Adora and the keeper of the Worldmind Prime Thoran had created a failsafe in case of another existential threat to Xandarian culture. The whole of the Nova-Force and the power of the Worldmind would be downloaded into the last surviving StarCorps member. The power would be returned to the Worldmind at a safe time, and the Worldmind would clone Xandar's slain populace and download their minds into the new cloned bodies.

Xandar's survivor was Garthan Saal, a by-the-book officer of the Nova Corps. Saal went insane at the sheer power of the entire Nova-Force. He christened himself Supernova and grew to a gigantic size, and set out for revenge on Nebula. He tracked her to Earth, where he battled the Avengers and Fantastic Four until he was tricked into entering the timestream to pursue Nebula.

Inside the timestream, Saal observed that another member of the StarCorps had survived: Richard Rider.

When the Xandar-Skrull War ended, Rider opted to return home to Earth, even though he was told that his powers would stay on Xandar. In truth, Rider was part of the failsafe plan, the one who was intended to return the Nova-Force to the Worldmind. Rider's powers were buried inside him, and would eventually be triggered by the adrenaline rush of a near-death experience.



Saal initially attacked Rider and stole his Nova powers, but soon realized Rider was the key that would 'unlock' the Nova-Force and resurrect Xandar. Rider had the purity of spirit to be able to resist the seduction of the Nova-Force's vast power, and he reactivated the Worldmind, which brought Xandar back to life.

The Xandar Cluster now became a new home for people who'd lost their homeworlds, and the shards were attached to a new vertical spire. The spire was presumably built by automated machinery in the time that Xandar's populace was deceased, but it was soon replaced by another horizontal construction closer to the original Xandar Cluster.

The StarCorps was reinstated and expanded. Now, the Corps would protect dozens of star systems whose security had been compromised by war or piracy. The new Corps was no longer exclusively comprised of Xandar natives, but had members from a variety of other species, including at least one Skrull.



The Xandar Cluster became allied with the Shi'ar Empire, which led to a shadowy conspiracy plot involving the Shi'ar's ambassador to Xandar. The plot involved placing surveillance satellites in various star systems, including Earth's system, as well as Garthan Saal replacing Rich Rider as a more controllable Centurion protector of the Sol System. Saal discovered the plot and revealed it to Rider on his deathbed, before reinstating Rider as a Centurion. The plot was presumably resolved, but no details are known.

The Annihilation Wave and the (Final?) Destruction of Xandar

When a vast army from another dimension attacked our universe, both Xandar and their old enemies the Skrulls would be among the casualties.

A warlord named Annihilus marshaled the combined armies of the Negative Zone, a dimension made of anti-matter. Annihilus convinced the other powers of his universe that our positive matter dimension was destroying theirs.

Annihilus' huge military force, the Annihilation Wave, smashed through the border between the two dimensions, the Crunch. They began to decimate our universe, starting with the Andromeda Galaxy.

The entire StarCorps was recalled to the Xandar Cluster to deal with the unrest caused by the Wave's attacks, but the Wave ambushed Xandar in the middle of the Corps' briefing. The Wave jammed the Corps' connection to the Worldmind to keep them from coordinating their defense, cut their supply lines, and slaughtered the entire Corps.

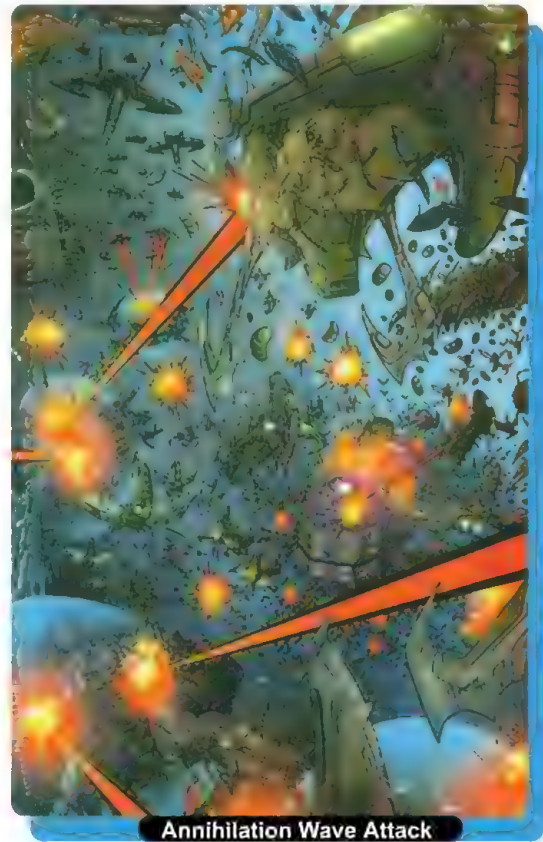
They shattered the Cluster and disintegrated many of the habitat shards, and killed the entire population. In the days that followed, much of Xandar's remains fell into the system's star and burned up.

The only known survivor of the StarCorps was Rich Rider. He agreed to have the entire Worldmind and Nova-Force downloaded into his body, and this time, he managed to hold it all without going insane like Garthan Saal did. He destroyed the Orienta Shard and the Wave forces active on it in his escape from the Tranta System.

Rider connected with the Kree and the surviving Skrulls, who formed a new United Front against the Annihilation Wave, which Rider led. Several months later the Annihilation Wave shattered the United Front, and Rider and his allies went underground. Rider himself managed to assassinate Annihilus, and between that and the destruction of a large portion of the Wave by Galactus, the Wave sued for peace and were ceded a portion of the galaxies they'd conquered.

Now that the war is over, the Worldmind, still active inside Rider, would like to see the StarCorps reinstated. Only time will tell if they will be, and if Xandar will live on again in any form.

- Brandon Seifert



Annihilation Wave Attack

Will Xandar Rise Again?

The Xandar Cluster was destroyed at the hands of the Annihilation Wave, its population slaughtered. But it's not as though Xandar hasn't recovered from such things before.

When the Cluster was decimated by Nebula, the populace was cloned by automated machinery and their minds were downloaded out of the Worldmind. Xandar lived again. Whether they can pull the same trick this time remains to be seen.

What's different is that Annihilus' army shattered the Cluster itself, rather than simply damaging the structure and killing the inhabitants. The entire Orienta Shard was destroyed during the war, and much of the Cluster has fallen into the star Tranta or has been destroyed during subsequent battles in the system. The cloning machinery probably didn't survive, although there may have been additional cloning tech secreted somewhere off-world in event of another population cataclysm.



Xandar could also live on if some of its people lived through their world's apocalypse. Some Xandarians were probably inevitably off-world. Xandar may even still have colony worlds; they did as recently as Air-Walker's elevation to Herald of Galactus. Then there's the fourth pod-world that went missing after Nebula's attack on Xandar. It's possible it was never recovered, and still contains Xandarian survivors.

And then there's the Xandarian "Dimensional Phaser" technology, which ejects the crews of damaged starships into a space outside our dimension. This technology could've been present on a larger scale on Xandar itself. And even if it wasn't there could still be Xandarian starship crews sealed safely inside other dimensions.

Alert - WorldMind Error Log: [This transmission was sent just days before the events of Annihilation #1. It is unknown at this time if the signal made it to Earth.] Displaying archived message - - -



To: Earth's Heroes

Sent by: Richard Rider (Nova), Commander of the United Front

It's the eve of a big battle. The United Front is ready. I thought I was. But I just found out four of my best friends are dead.

I thought all of the death and destruction out here was becoming meaningless. I guess I was wrong.

One of the Skrulls who joined the United Front last week told me about a feed from Earth that's been getting re-played a lot. Back home, some super-villains went nuts and blew up a whole town. And my friends with it. My teammates, the New Warriors.

The WorldMind told me it would shut up for an hour and let me send out this transmission to Earth. We're not sure it will make it since we have yet to receive any response to SOS beacons sent to Earth's heroes, but I have to try. Then, the WorldMind is going to make me forget what I've learned so it won't throw me for tomorrow's big mission.

I want to run back to Earth. But what can I do? They're already gone. And I've got too big of a responsibility out here. I know my friends would want me to stay. I know it. Too many lives are at risk.

So for now, until all of this is over, all I can do is send out this reminder of who they were. To let the world know that I knew what kind of heroes – and friends – they were.



Night Thrasher: It all began with him. I'd been powerless for what seemed like 10 years. I guess it was really just a year or two. But after giving up my powers I hit bottom fast. I was miserable. I didn't know what to do with my life. Then one night, this jerk in fancy body armor followed me from work and chased me to a rooftop. He dangled me off the roof like Michael Jackson's baby and got me to admit I was who he thought I was. Then he dropped me. I really thought that was the end. Lucky for both of us, my powers kicked back in. I didn't die, but I could have. Later he admitted he wasn't even sure his little stunt would work. Then I watched as he threatened and conned two other heroes onto his team. I didn't trust him. I didn't like him. Okay, I resented him for risking my life like that. And for being a spoiled rich kid who thought he could bully his way through anything with a temper tantrum or money. But, he also gave me my life back. And he saved a lot of other lives, too. No, we didn't always get along, and I didn't always agree with his choices. But – and I would never tell him this – I can't think of anyone else I respect more. He was smart (a lot smarter than me) and knew how to make a tough call in the heat of battle. And in the end, I don't think I would want anyone else heading into battle beside me than Night Thrasher.

WORLD MIND SUBSPACE LINK:

- ESTABLISHED -

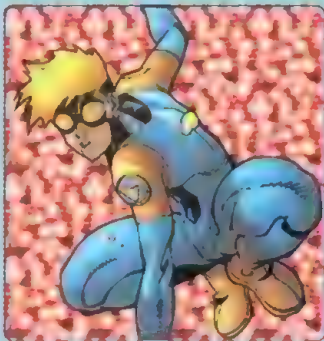
TRANSMITTING

UNITED FRONT



Namorita: Nita deserved better than I could give her. I have one, big regret with her. I've probably kicked myself every day since that day. She was sick and needed me, and I couldn't be there for her. To this day, I can't even explain why I hesitated. But I did. I messed up. I tried to fix it and then realized I couldn't. What was done was done. Eventually the bitterness died down. At least we were able to start rebuilding our friendship before she was taken from me. I just hope she knew, at least a little bit, how much she meant to me. I still remember when we met. I had just gotten my powers back by being dropped off a roof. It was my first super-hero fight in nearly two years. It was both exhilarating and terrifying. And there she was in the center of it trading punches and quips with a friggin' Herald of Galactus. Wearing nothing but

a green bathing suit. It was probably the sexiest thing I've ever seen. But possibly the best part was she wasn't just some dumb blonde. Everyone always thought Speedball was the big jokester of the group. But no one could stick it to one of us more than Nita. She was frustrating and charming all at once. And stubborn as hell. She would dig in her heels when her beliefs were threatened. And that's what made her a real hero. Her beliefs were her own, whether the country or her own teammates agreed. She answered to no one but her own honor. In a way, she was more heroic than I could ever be.



Speedball: I'll miss the toothpick already. A lot. He really was my best friend. In a way, he was the brother my real brother is too smart to be. He was a goofball. It's hard for me to accept he's really dead. We all got so used to him being invulnerable. That's what made it so fun to go into battle with him. You didn't have to worry about him. He'd always bounce back. But I guess not this time. It's funny. At first, I didn't know why Night Thrasher let him be on the team. He barely had any control over his powers and was more annoying than funny. He was just too much of a geek. He seemed like a wannabe. But the first time I saw him power-down into his secret identity, it all fell into place. He was just a scared kid. He was younger than any of us. The reason it seemed like he was faking it was because he was. But as he got

more comfortable with us, he really grew on me. And like me, he cared a lot about the team and being a super-hero. The rest of his day, his whole life, was just time in between getting back to the Crash Pad and going out with the Warriors. I could tell. It's what he lived for. It made him so happy because he wanted to make a difference. He really believed in the super-hero shtick. He loved it. Nothing made him happier than being surrounded by his friends and saving the world. I'll miss that little twerp.



Microbe: I feel kind of funny speaking about this kid. I only knew him a short time. He was one of our newest members. And he really shouldn't have been there. He shouldn't have died. It's one of the things Night Thrasher and I disagreed about. But the kid was under his charge. So what could I say? The kid had a big heart. I knew he was scared but he stuck it through. It really meant a lot to him for the rest of the team to accept him. I wish we were nicer to him. I wish we'd helped him with his powers more. It's just not right.

I don't know what else to say. This is hard. I hope the surviving Warriors are okay. I don't know what's going on back home. But know that I'm thinking of you and will get home as soon as we beat these bugs.

End transmission.



WORLD MIND SUBSPACE LINK:

- TERMINATED

COMPLETED

UNITED FRONT

ROCKET BOOSTER



Annihilation Day Plus 219 Near Earth Orbit. Sol System.

Dad. Mom. Robbie. How long has it been since I last saw you? Six? Seven months? Maybe more? It's hard to keep track of time when you're out here. I guess you've been concerned about my welfare and no doubt you're angry wondering why I've not kept in touch. That I've let you all down again.

If you feel that way about me, I do understand. I didn't have the heart to try and get in touch with you back when I was fighting the Skrulls for over a year despite how homesick I was. You should've disowned me back then, considering all the heartache I caused, the worry... but you forgave me.

...But I'm not going to let **history** repeat itself. Not this time. So if you "give me a moment" I'll try and fill you in about what's happened to me and why I haven't contacted you sooner.



At present I'm in reasonable good health, though in all honesty not necessarily in spirit. With what's happened to me and those around me, I'm having difficulty thinking about the most simplistic of things. Keeping track of time is one thing. I was recording my last log entry which I've sent to the **Fantastic Four** ...

...and I got stuck because I couldn't remember a name; someone who is most probably dead, who before dying, ensured hundreds of lives were saved. Odd how the mind works, I can recall everything in my life from the age of three: the day you, Mom, bought me my first bicycle which ended up in the lake because the brakes failed to work. I came home dripping, God knows what, onto the kitchen floor and I was so **afraid**. Because I knew the moment I told you what had happened to the bike you'd be angry. You weren't, of course, but you didn't give me any pocket money for several weeks

Dad. Somewhere in one of the drawers in my old room is that mint copy of **Star Ranger** that you gave me on my seventh birthday. You'll recall I used to dress up with a old blanket around my shoulders and pretend to fly around the garden saving the universe from the forces of evil... Never realized back then that dreams can become reality.





Reality though can also become a **nightmare**. Odd how you can remember events.. even if they happened years ago but sometimes you can't recall something as simple as someone's **name**. Even if that someone was an alien...

MESSAGE HOME

Art and Story by D. B. Colors and Letters by C. B. Nova created by Marv Wolfman
Thanks to Doug Smith of novaprimepage.com

I hope, by the way, things are okay with you. **Cosmically** speaking, I'm not that far away from you at all. Just a stones-thrown away in fact....

I know it was a bit sudden when I dropped by those many months back, and came to tell you that I had received a message from the **Xandarian High-Command** that all **Nova Corps** operatives were being recalled to **Xandar**. Top priority. No refusals accepted.

I can see **Mother Earth**. I've got a perfect view from where I'm standing by the way. It's exactly like what you see on those **documentaries**. The ones on the Science Channel. **Big. Blue.** I can see the East Coast quite clearly..

You an' Dad were angry at first, especially Dad. He thought I was letting my priorities slip. That I was placing my Film Major Degree at ESU on the line. That I was going to let my life fall apart all over again. You heard me out though, that in all probability I'd be back home within a month. He begrudgingly accepted and made a promise to speak to the Deacon to see I could resume in the fall. So much for that plan.

an I know Dad wasn't the only one not impressed by my departure. **Speedball** took it badly too. He an' the other Warriors had been given a second season of that **New Warriors** reality series I did in the summer. I hope Speedball made it a success.

I still have the **photo** you gave me, Mom. Kept safe and near to my heart. I've looked at it most days. Its been a good comfort aid. Been a beacon of light on the darkest of days..



So I better tell you what's been happening to me. I got to Xandar safe and sound but, no sooner had I arrived, I knew something was up. It was the calm before the storm.

A massive alien fleet from some other universe had destroyed a major facility out on the very edge of the known universe. ...And if the Worldmind was correct (and its rarely ever wrong), it was heading straight for us.

Before we could raise Xandar's defenses, they came out of nowhere. The Annihilation Wave. Thousands of ships like a plague of locusts. And we couldn't stop them. And when I mean "we", I mean the Corps. Every single one of us at full Nova Force capacity. It didn't mean nothing. Within a few hours of their arrival, Xandar was a lost cause.



Remember, Dad, when you told me about what war was really like. About **Vietnam**. You told me about **Hanoi**, the **Killing Fields**... when you watched the news on TV, saw children lying dead in the paddy fields. About the World Wars. When you told me about the **Kamikazies** flying into the ships at **Pearl Harbor**.

We'll I've seen it myself Dad. Believe me, I now know what war is **really** like. Sure, I saw things during the **Skrull War**. Some things that, to this day, I still cannot fully recall. But what I've seen and witnessed over these last few months can't be easily described.



When the dust settled one thing was clear. I alone had survived. **Luck?** **Fate?** Back when I first got my powers **seven** years ago (seems more like **thirty**) I used to think it was a random, one in a million situation. I'm not so sure now.

Is my role as Nova **pre-ordained**? Was I chosen by some powerful cosmic being whose got my life mapped out and hasn't yet decided to let me in on it? Answers on a postcard, please.

Turned out I wasn't alone. The **Worldmind** had survived. Bobbie, you'd have a field day with what I saw. Not that I was impressed by what it had in mind. All it was interested in was its own survival. Xandar was gone but its **legacy** had to **endure**. In order for that to happen the **Worldmind** and the **Nova Force** had to find a new home from home. Problem was only a Nova could **carry** the burden. Guess where this is leading...



You played a part in my decision, Dad. Whether I've made the right choice. Jury's still out on that one. For the moment, I've got the **whole** of the **Nova Force** at my disposal.



Remember when I first told you all that I'd become a superhero? When I first received my superpowers? How the transformation from lowly **teenager** to **hero** was so traumatic it put me in a coma for a few days...



Well, try and imagine that situation a thousand fold. It'll give you some idea of how **painful** my rebirth was.

However, I didn't start out too well. I let things slip. The **power** was so **intoxicating** that when I saw the enemy still hanging around Xandar's remains, common sense decided to do a runner.

Then fate decided to intervene yet again. I met two more survivors **Drax** and **Cammi**. The former is known as the **Destroyer**. He lives up to the title. Kinda looks like Vin Diesel but with green skin. The girl. Truthfully there's no way I could describe her without swearing, Mom. So I'll leave it at that.



A few days later I came across a fellow Terran. I met **Quasar** a few times during the **Infinity War**. One evening at the **Baxter Building** we played poker with the **Thing**. He's a good listener. We swapped stories and he once asked me if I was interested in joining **Avergers Infinity**. Don't know whether he was serious. Never took it up. Maybe I should of cause then I would've got to know him better...

By now I knew who was behind **Xandar's** destruction. Although, for the record, **Drax** knew first. **Annihilus**.



You know, I'm missing my old enemies. Guys like the **Condor**, **Diamondhead** and the **Sphinx**. I could handle them. All I needed back then were **fists** and **wisecracks**. They won't do now.

He's in a league of his own. I was lucky. I left the battlefield with a badly scarred face. Don't worry. It's not that bad. **Quasar** wasn't so lucky. **He died**. Playing the role of hero right up to very last moment before **Annihilus** killed him. No scratch that. **Murdered him**. ...And despite all my **new** power, I couldn't save him. Another casualty to be added to the list

It gave me impetus to take on the Wave. But I couldn't do it alone. Between myself, Drax and the Worldmind a resistance movement was formed. Yeah all those war stories you told me, Dad, came in good use. We've fought Annihilus in **system** after **system**, on **planet** after **planet**. Losses have been great on both sides but recently we've suffered the most.



I'm in good company though. You'd like **Peter**, Mom. He's kind of like **Bernie** but with fiber optic implants rather than glasses. Got a great sense of humor. Even though I've lost mine. He's kept morale up. Mine especially. He's a man of mystery though. Used to be known as **Starlord**. Kinda reminds me of that hero I read in that comic: you know the one I used to pretend to be when Cap, Bernie and I were kids.



I did have another closer friend. **Gamora**. Don't know whether you'd approve of her, Mom. But she's been there when I've needed her. Or more like when she's been in need...



I've also made some alliances which for the record are **questionable**. Former **enemies** that some of my fellow heroes wouldn't approve of. Well as they say desperate situations require desperate remedies...



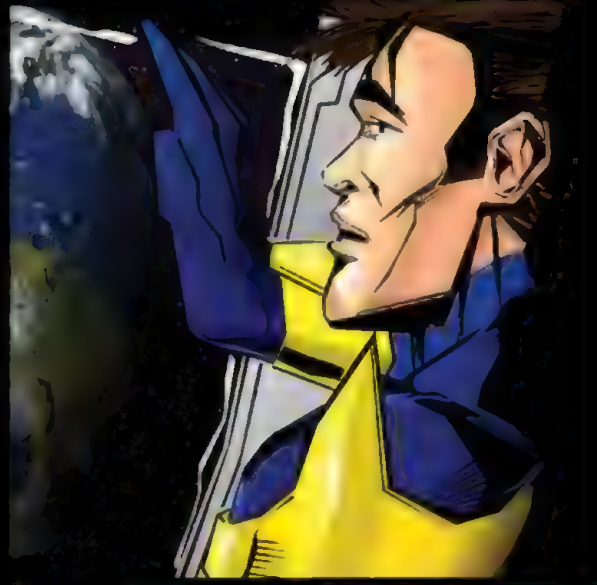
Not that Earth's heroes are in any way able to question **my** actions. Their **own** leave a lot to be desired.



I've got to sign-off now. I hope you get to hear this message which I've requested **Professor Richards** to pass onto you. I don't know if I'll be able to send another message. Things looks uncertain at present.



Pass on my thoughts to Robbie, Bernie and Caps. An' before I forget how's **Ginger** and the baby? Please let her know that I'm okay.

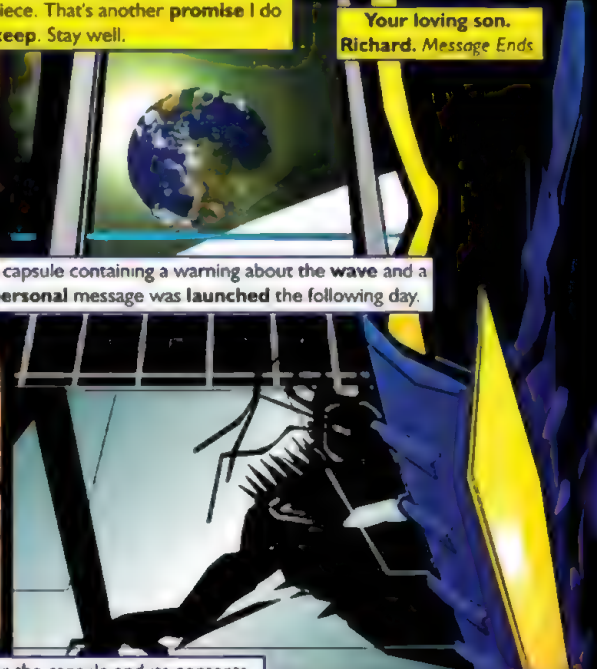


Above all don't worry about me. I'm taking every day as it comes, trying to stay in one piece. So far I've managed it and I do aim to come back hopefully in one piece. That's another **promise** I do intend to **keep**. Stay well.

Your loving son.
Richard. Message Ends



A capsule containing a warning about the **wave** and a **personal message** was launched the following day.



Whether the capsule and its contents were intercepted is presently **unknown**

Some time Ago...

Extract from a New Hempsted Police Report: At approximately 11.00 a.m EST, a phone call was received from **Charles Rider**. I interviewed Mr Rider at 1.00 p.m. Mr Rider was concerned about his second son, **Robert**, who he'd reported Missing Without Trace.

He and his wife had last seen their son, a scientist at Queens, the night before. He had left the family residence late intending to catch the last train into Manhattan as his classes were due to recommence the following Monday after seimester.

However when close friends of their son (Note: Interview with Mr Roger Cooper to take place at 5.00 p.m today) called the following morning to inform the Riders that their son had not turned up at their house. Mr Rider became concerned and called the authorities.

I instructed a search to be carried out supported by concerned neighbors. On the third day of the search, a pair of broken glasses were found several streets away. The Riders were able to identify the item. Their son was wearing the item in question when he was at their home. I have interviewed several eye-witnesses who came forward. They saw mysterious lights in the sky the night Mr Rider disappeared. However I have dismissed them, considering they have no bearing regarding this investigation.

Presently the Riders eldest son, Richard, is still unavailable for interview. I've read the dossier supplied under SHRA protocols. Richard, 24, was recently exposed to be the superhero known as Nova when details of his dual identity were leaked on the internet.

I do not believe him to be involved with his brother's disappearance. However he will be interviewed to cross him off the list under MWT guidelines. SHRA are also k...."

To be Continued...

NOVA BLAZES FORWARD TO THE FUTURE!

ABNETT, LANNING (DnA) AND ROSEMANN DISCUSS NOVA'S NEW SERIES

After leading the United Front to victory against Annihilus and the Annihilation Wave, Nova has chosen to remain in the Andromeda Galaxy to help restore order and justice to a devastated galactic population. These further adventures will be featured in a new Nova series scheduled to premiere in April 2007! Rocket Boosters interviewed the new creative team of Dan Abnett and Andy Lanning (DnA) along with Bill Rosemann to learn more about the book and their thoughts on the Nova character!

RB: What storylines can we expect to see early in the new series?

DnA: The two big storylines to kick us off will be Richard trying to cope with the demands of being a one-man Nova Corps, and his long awaited return to Earth. The former will be incredibly tough, and the latter... well, there are a whole bunch of shocks, surprises and twists awaiting Rich (and Earth's going to be pretty surprised by him in his changed form too).

RB: Bill has previously described the post-Annihilation Nova as "the Lone Ranger of Marvel's sci-fi cauldron". Nova's journey through Annihilation does draw interesting parallels with the Lone Ranger's story (death of the Rangers/Nova Corps, Tonto/Peter Quill, Silver/WorldMind, etc.). With the post-Annihilation cosmic landscape in chaos and a strong need for justice, will Nova's setting be more like the Old West/American Civil War Reconstruction or something else entirely?

DnA: Parallels to both, really, and to any post-war location (Europe after WW2, for example). It's going to be tough out there: people are scared, cut off, lacking resources or security. Nova's got a job on his hands.

RB: Will other established alien races (Kree, Skrull, Shi'Ar, the Annihilation Wave survivors, etc.) appear in the new series? If so, how much coordination is required with the other Marvel editors to use them in Nova?

Rosemann: In Nova #1 you can spot Annihilation Wave refugees such as the Kree -- and even some survivors from the other side of the skirmish! The Skrull Empire was basically decimated, so I wouldn't bet on them popping up too soon. As for the Shi'Ar, look no further than current and upcoming issues of Uncanny X-Men!

RB: Dan and Andy, will the history and nature of the Nova Force be explored?

DnA: We are intending to do a major story involving the Nova Force, the World Mind and the consequences of it all being loaded into Rich, so there's every chance of the origin and nature of the whole thing getting explored. We suppose, after all this time, that'd be something Nova fans would be really interested in seeing.

RB: The WorldMind has the brain patterns of all deceased Xandarians. Will Nova be able to talk with and learn from individual patterns i.e.: Rhomann Dey, Garthan Saal, Tanak Valt, etc. or do they work collectively and can only speak in one voice?

DnA: ...hmmmm. That's distinctly possible ("Psssst! Bill! Take notes! This guy Doug is full of shiny ideas!")

RB: One of the subplots that ran during Nova's second and third series was the incident on Epyrus 7 in which Nova fought the Skrulls and Diamondhead during the Skrull/Xandar War. All of the details were never fully given but it was traumatic enough to Nova that all his memories of it were erased along with Diamondhead's by the Xandarians. Will Nova be revisiting Epyrus 7 and find out exactly what happened?

DnA: Actually, that's tasty and provocative too. One of the problems facing a "new" launch book is that we can't get too tangled in past continuity, for the sake of keeping new readers up to speed. The story you're referring to goes back a few years, and might be a turn-off to fresh readers, who don't like the idea of having "missed" things. That said, if there's stuff we feel we can do with it that will please everyone, we will.

Cover from Nova #1 - 2007

RB: Due to the events in Annihilation, Nova is now the sole bearer of the Nova Force and WorldMind. Are there plans for the eventual return of the Nova Corps?

Rosemann: It's funny that you should ask that, because that's one of the first subjects that Rich and the WorldMind disagree about. But I'll let you figure out who is on which side of the argument. Speaking as a long-time Nova fan (but not the only voice on deciding the fate of the Corps), I believe that making Rich the last remaining Centurion -- who is burdened with containing not only WorldMind, but also the jaw-dropping Nova Force -- was a stroke of genius. When your main character has an entire army backing you up, the drama decreases -- but when you're the last man standing? Now that is interesting.

RB: How would you each describe Nova's evolution as a character over the past 30 years? Where would you like to see him as a character on his 50th anniversary?

DnA: Accelerating. It's great to be working on a much loved character and to be able to launch him on into a new phase of life and adventures. We like the "new" Nova, mainly because he's the old Nova, just grown up a bit. On his 50th anniversary? A classic, all time great Marvel hero of the first rank.



Above: The Nova sketch done by Sean Chen which convinced Bill Rosemann that Chen was the right person for the series.



Right: The splash page from Nova #1 (minus dialogue) by Sean Chen.

BUT WHAT ABOUT THAT TIME?

A Look At "Issues"
In Nova's Continuity



As with any character who has been around a decent number of years, Nova has had events happen which seemingly conflict with, and even contradict, previous events in past issues. These unintentional continuity glitches can drive some fans crazy. In order to prevent rioting, health problems and help maintain sanity, we will try to address some of the speed bumps in the road trip of Nova's history and present possible explanations for them.

Annihilation:

Nova's uniform went from the original look in the Prologue and then in Nova #1 it suddenly became his old New Warriors look but with a new 8 point star on the helmet that he hadn't had before. Plus, the back of the series' Kolins-designed uniform has the old 6 point star on the back and not the new 8 which is on the helmet. And lastly, SuperNova's image showed him with the 8 point helmet star when all of his appearances had him with a Centurion's 6 point star on the helmet.

In Annihilation: Prologue, Nova has the classic original uniform on and continues to have it until the end of the issue. It's stated at the beginning of Annihilation: Nova #1 that he had blacked out again. That's when he's in the old New Warriors costume with a new 8 point helmet star.

What if, while he was unconscious, the WorldMind transferred part of the Nova Force into Rich in order for Nova to survive his injuries so he could fulfill his duties to protecting the WorldMind? In doing so, perhaps the WorldMind also began trying to transform his uniform and helmet since Rich was now the only survivor of the Corps and Xandar?



Annihilation: Prologue



Annihilation: Nova #1

However, Rich's subconscious perhaps knew what was happening as he has gone through it before in the New Warriors' StarLost Saga. His subconscious mind resisted and part of that resistance took a physical manifestation by shaping his uniform into the one costume that he felt symbolized his individuality. When Rich had worn that particular NW costume, he wasn't part of the Corps, had a successful hero career with the Warriors (and solo) and he answered to no one.

As for the back of the new uniform having the 6 point star, it could still be his subconscious fighting the WorldMind and his fears about having too much power. But at this point, it's only appearing as the back starburst.

And as for why the image of SuperNova showed him with an 8 point helmet star instead of the 6, we have never seen the actual scene where Garthan Saal got the Nova Force. Perhaps he originally did have 8 and he shaped it himself back to six? A subconscious move on Saal's part that perhaps says Saal himself didn't feel worthy of the power and responsibility he was given.

Marvel's Reply To The Above Scenario (from Andy Schmidt - Editor of Annihilation):

"That's an awful lot of thought for what is essentially an editorial mistake. I missed it and didn't have time to fix it before Nova 1 had to go to the printer. On the other hand, let's go with your story-driven explanation!"

Q: When did Rich decide to go to college? He never seemed to be interested in his education before. Plus, how did he get into college when he didn't graduate high school and never really seemed to have a knack for learning?

A: While it's never really been stated why he went to college, we have seen mentions of his feelings on school. In Nova #1 v2 (1994), Rich is shown at his friend's graduation. He appears to have a look of regret.

Some readers felt that Erik Larsen simply put Rich into college without any real respect to the character's history. This isn't necessarily correct. In Nova #2 v2 (1994), while flying over the Yale campus, Nova thinks "I wonder if I coulda cut it up here?". So the potential interest in college was there, however slight it may have started.

And how did Rich get into and stay in college with his history of academic shortcomings? Rich getting his high school diploma would have been the easiest part. He would have gone to an accredited institution and received his GED (General Education Diploma). His entrance into college would have required a bit more work. Rich would have to take a college entrance exam (the SAT or ACT) and applied to college with an acceptable score.

Rich could have achieved this by studying hard, either on his own or, more likely, with his friends (Bernie and Caps) and his genius brother (Robert). Another explanation could be that Rich was able to score high on his test by his subconscious link to the WorldMind.

This link has been used in the past. In The Man Called Nova #1, Rich is asked a hard math question after he was caught lost in thought during class. Suddenly, the answer pops into his head with the implication being that his new powers have linked him with the Living Computers/WorldMind and they provided the answer for him on a subconscious level.

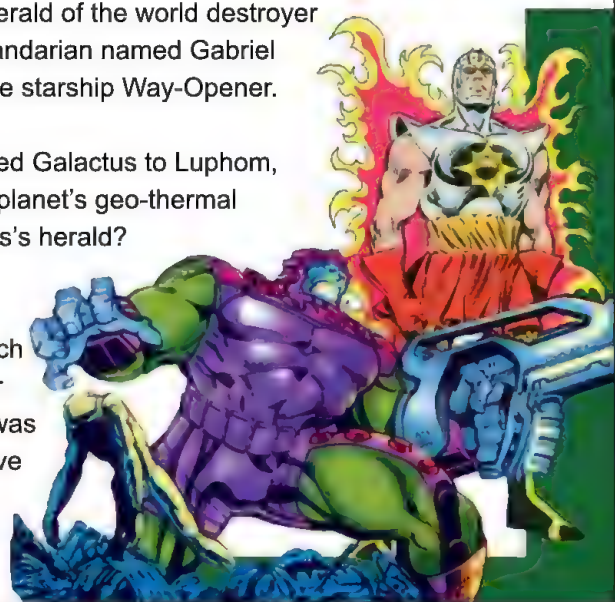
Later, in Nova #15 v2 (1994), Nova had to repair a damaged weapon, whose design he wouldn't have been familiar with, in order to stop Kraa's attack. After recognizing that he "can't let the explosive decompression unbalance the core's protonic flux couplings", Nova jokingly thinks "It's amazing what you pick up from Star Trek". Rich Rider proceeds to manually connect the core to the weapon's matter conversion chamber. The information and knowledge had to come from somewhere and it most likely was the WorldMind's link with Rich.

Q: Why did Zorr attack Xandar and then leave the Andromeda Galaxy to go all the way to the Milky Way Galaxy and specifically New York City on Earth instead of simply staying in his own galaxy to find planets to drain?

A: Brandon Seifert came up with a brilliant theory that Zorr's target of Xandar wasn't random but was an act of vengeance. The motive behind Zorr's attack was primarily to drain worlds of their geo-thermal energies to be used in the restoration of Lumphom, his homeworld. Lumphom had been destroyed by the planet devourer, Galactus, sometime earlier. However, as is Galactus's custom, his herald would have arrived at the planet first to determine if it were a suitable planet for Galactus. Given the timeline of the Marvel Universe, the herald of the world destroyer at that time would have been Air-Walker. Air-Walker was a former Xandarian named Gabriel Lan who had become a herald while on an exploratory mission on the starship Way-Opener.

Knowing that Air-Walker was a Xandarian and he was the one who led Galactus to Lumphom, Zorr would have sought revenge of him. Since he already needed a planet's geo-thermal energies, why not begin with the planet of the man who was Galactus's herald?

That would also explain why Zorr eventually came to Earth and New York City. Zorr would have continued following Air-Walker's path which eventually ended on Earth with Air-Walker's fall to the Fantastic Four and, later, Thor in New York City. Although by this point, Air-Walker was a robot with Lan's consciousness duplicated inside, Zorr may not have known this or even cared if he did. To him, it was still a matter of honor that he destroy Air-Walker in whatever form he was in.



WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN

I am Uatu, one of the race you know as the Watchers! It has been my responsibility and my honor to watch many of the heroes of your planet Earth. Along with the events which transpire on your world, I am privileged to also witness many that might have been.

In your reality, the hero known to you as Nova has been involved in many battles and has saved Earth numerous times. Unknown to him but now known to you, he would have been involved in many other crises if not for the hand of fate (or cancellation).

New Warriors vol. 1 -

According to New Warriors' writer Evan Skolnick, Rich Rider would have been involved in:

The Xandarian Conspiracy - "The Xandarian conspiracy involved renegade Shi'ar personnel who wanted to bring the "glory days" back; who wanted to put the "evil" back in "evil empire". Their plan (which, again, I never got the chance to fully flesh out) was going to involve many alien races from across the universe, including Earthlings, Kymellians, Skrulls, Galadorians, Xandarians and many others. Basically, I wanted to bring all the Warriors' cosmic ties together for a truly epic space storyline.

The Shi'ar renegades were using the Xandarians and their Nova Corps to spy on other races, in preparation for an invasion-type thing. I figured maybe they were working on some kind of super-weapon, which Volx might stumble onto during her quest to find and kill Rom."

Spaceknight Nova - Skolnick continues; "NW #75 would have seen the Warriors and Garthan Saal in space, chasing Volx (in separate ships, probably). The Warriors would have been caught in cross-species conflict as the Shi'ar situation came to a head, with Volx using her shapeshifting abilities to foment more trouble for them.

"Rom, Brandy Clark and their daughter, Passion, would be revealed still living in peace on Galador. At some point, the planet would be threatened, and Rich Rider, alone, would make a momentous decision. He would enter the cyborg chamber and be converted into a metallic Spaceknight (reminiscent of his Nova costume), leaving his physical body behind, to save the day.

"During the course of the story, Rich's body (and Galador?) would be destroyed, lost or stolen, leaving Rich stuck in this powerful but cold and sterile super armor. The irony, of course, is that Rich belittled his humanity and obsessed over having super-powers; now, that's all he would have, with no humanity.

"THE WARRIORS #1 (or whatever it would've been called) would have taken up the tale three or four months later. For his part, Rich would reap the bitter harvest of his all-consuming desire to be a super hero; now, a super hero is ALL that he would be. He would be so embarrassed by his metallic form that he would be a virtual prisoner in the crash-pad. So he was going to live there, along with Passion, who had nowhere else to go. This was going to put Rich into an intriguing new role, that of reluctant father-figure."

Skolnick also says that Rich would have eventually gotten his real body back and then left the New Warriors to "make room for still more new blood".



New Warriors vol. 2 -

Nova would have faced a completely different Xandarian conspiracy, according to New Warriors' volume 2 writer Jay Faerber:

The Xandarian Conspiracy II - "Well basically, because of Nova's recent screw-ups (killing Ginger's husband, shattering Diamondhead, etc.) the Xandarians were going to come to Earth to court martial him, basically. And the Warriors (ALL of them -- anyone who's ever been a Warrior) were going to have to come to his defense, leading into our double-sized 12th issue, which would've featured a global war between the Warriors and the entire Xandarian Nova Corps. It would've been revealed that the leader of the Xandarian campaign against Nova was Garthan Saal's brother, who blamed Nova for Saal's death. So the Warriors would've uncovered this sinister motive, and Saal's brother would've been dealt with by the Xandarians. And Nova would've regained his rightful place as a confident, effective hero.

Nova: Hero For Hire? - "At the end of the Xandarian plotline, Nova would've finally gotten all the recognition and adoration he craved, and it would've led him to leave the Warriors in favor of leading his own super-team -- a new Heroes For Hire, funded by Stark-Fujikawa. The Heroes For Hire would've been rivals of the Warriors for awhile, and Nova would've gotten an increasingly-swelled head, as the HFH would've been media darlings. Eventually, though, he'd realize that Stark-Fujikawa was using the HFH for nefarious purposes, and would've returned to his friends, the Warriors."

III-Begotten: The Samuel Saga -

The face of Nova would have been changed forever if this particular story had been published....literally! 'Ill-Begotten' was intended to be an eight issue limited series written by Jim Shooter in 2002. It was to be a sequel to his legendary Avengers epic 'The Korvac Saga' which ran from Avengers #167, 168, 170 - 177 back in 1978.

In the proposed sequel, the story centers on Korvac and the battle with his cosmically-powered son, Samuel. During the story, Korvac would have also battled Nova. With Nova being easily beaten by Korvac, Queen Adora and the StarCops' High Command to initiate the 'Doomsday Protocols'. The protocols involved transferring ALL of the Nova Force along with energies from the High Command into Rich Rider to battle the threat.

With renewed power, Nova is able to continue the fight and battles Korvac alongside the Avengers. However, even with the additional energy, Nova is defeated by Korvac and is physically aged by his foe to the point of death. Before he dies, the Avengers endow the fallen hero with Avengers status. Nova then uses the last of the protocol energy to transfer his essence into the corpse of an elderly woman named Mrs. Rubio in a hospital morgue on Earth in order to complete one last mission. His physical body then dies in Moondragon arms. Korvac proceeds to disintegrate Nova's body after he has completely destroyed Xandar.

In the hospital, Rich Rider's essence has taken the elderly woman's corpse to the bedside of an injured young man named Ken Smith. In a burst of blue light and Rich's words of "Tag, you're it.", the Nova Force is transferred to Smith who becomes the new Nova. The new Nova, along with the Avengers and the Silver Surfer, defeat Korvac.

Watcher's Analysis: I have monitored Richard Rider's activities as Nova with great interest for years. While he has faced many challenges and hardships, Nova can consider himself quite fortunate to have avoided the tragedies presented here. The battle against the insane Korvac, in particular!



The sources for this article are:

- 1) Evan Skolnick interview with the Nova Prime Page website - May 3, 2000
- 2) Jay Faerber interview with the Nova Prime Page website - April 29, 2000
- 3) Ill-Begotten was released in outline form by Jim Shooter in 2002 to various internet websites.

This article was written by Doug Smith. Watchers simply refer to him as "The Strange One". He's not related to Ken Smith in any way.

As the saying goes in this lovable hobby of ours, every comic book is somebody's first ever issue. Whether or not Nova was involved in that initial expedition into the super-hero comic genre, it is clear the character became a favorite of yours, or you wouldn't be gathered with us today in this celebration of all things Rich Rider. The potential catch is, it may very well depend on when each of us 'discovered' Nova along the real world timeline over these past 30-years, to determine a favorite version of the character.

The newest of Nova fans may be scratching their collective heads and wondering what possible controversy could exist for a character who was never cloned (that we know of), and never replaced within the confines of the 54 solo issues or 89 issues of New Warriors with a doppelganger. Or was he?

Yes, it is true. A number of the hardest of hardcore fanatics find enough time and energy to discuss, and argue with great vehemence about the personality developments or perceived regressions of a fictional hero. This kind of thing isn't relegated to soap operas or Star Trek fans in mortal caged combat with Babylon 5 fans, or dudes who, instead of introducing themselves, they enter conversations with perfect strangers declaring, "Han shot first!"

Among comic fans, there are wars of words beyond 'smart' Hulk versus 'monster' Hulk, or whether or not Thunderstrike is more relatable than Thor or the dreaded, inevitable Hal Jordan versus Kyle Rayner flame rituals over who owns the best ever Green Lantern mantle.

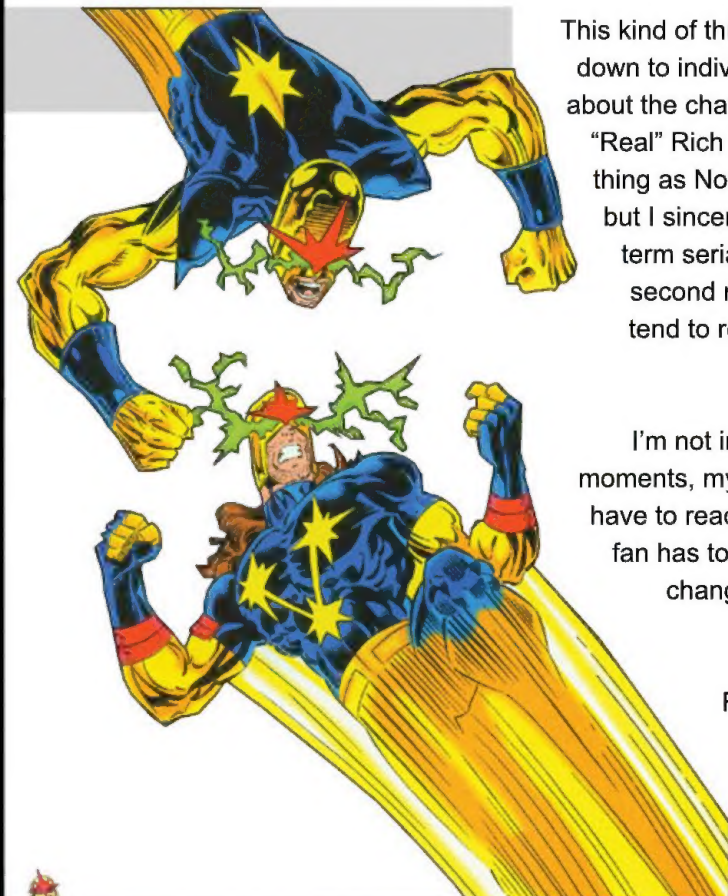


Aversions to Versions: Will The Real Rich Rider Sign In Please? by Don Lund

This kind of thing happens with Nova as well, and can generally be boiled down to individual perceptions and when the person first started reading about the character. The title of this article is a purposeful misnomer. The "Real" Rich Rider can't sign in, because, well, Virginia, there is no such thing as Nova in this world of ours. Oh, he is real enough in our hearts, but I sincerely believe it is time to understand that the changes in long term serial fiction are a part of the real fabric of the medium. And the second rule appears to be that changes include a circular cycle that tend to revisit the roots of characters or a focus on what made them tick from their earliest sagas.

I'm not immune to these judgments. I too have declared my favorite moments, my favorite character elements and ultimate adventures that I have to read time and again. Nonetheless, there comes a time when a fan has to either move on or find other books to read, or embrace the changes and continue to enjoy Nova's endless battle against the forces of evil.

For our hero, the battle lines have been drawn almost every time Rich returns from the void. Any type of hiatus usually means that something will be very different for Nova the next instant the character is allowed to roam free once again in the pages of the Marvel Universe.



Did You Know?..The three starbursts on Nova's chest symbolize the original three planets of the Tranta System including Xandar? However, the large sunburst on his back does not represent the system's sun. It was simply a design element.

After all, the changes generally are made in an attempt to lure more readers to a newer series than the previous series had, or the whole making money concept of comics goes down the proverbial drain. As we all know by this point, some of those changes work out really well, and a lot of them do not work at all.

Despite not enjoying every incarnation of Nova over the last three decades, I almost always find some elements, some bits of this favorite character of mine among the perceived unpleasant changes over the course of a story or extended run. If Rich starts to deviate too far from the norm (the norm defined as the parameters set by the character's award winning creator, Mr. Marv Wolfman), then I have to deal with it or drop the book.

Of course, I just set that stage with the keys to the character that I enjoy most, based on when I first read those adventures from volume one. Others first "found" Rich Rider in the pages of New Warriors and stranger still, some folks didn't read about Nova at all until Nova, volume three. Or weirder yet, some people had not even heard about the existence of the New Warriors until Civil War, of all things. Talk about some unpleasant changes, those of us here who are also New Warriors fans may need therapy after that Civil War stuff is over. But, I digress (with apologies to Peter David).



The point of this particular diatribe being that while some readers fancy the overconfident stubble-trimmer version of Nova, who suddenly started to talk like Ben Grimm, while others do not view the original version mired in outdated, retro campy material. In either case, how could volume three be any kind of retroactive continuity (or, retcon) when it so closely attempted to follow the paces of the first series? Because in the eyes of some, they found that elements of a favored series with their version of the character were overlooked. Any bit of character history may be one person's dismissive minutia and another's all time favorite treasure. It is the nature of the beast when characters literally outlive the audience over generations. A fact many of us often forget when we demand our very specific needs as the only ones that need to be met on a monthly basis.

That aside, even if all the essentials of Nova, both light and dark were compiled into the character walking around in Annihilation, but the character's power levels are off the charts; there are still going to be some complaints by those who prefer Rich sans the mega Xandarian Worldmind abilities. The optimist might note, at least the character is a part of a huge modern storyline. Provided that whatever changes the character experiences are well explained within the context of the story, I have learned to adapt fairly quickly. The aforementioned Annihilation is certainly traumatic enough to affect some evolution with Nova, beyond the power levels, or the scope and scale of the war around him. In that sense, I've enjoyed every page of Annihilation, without any idea whether or not our preferred protagonist will make it out in one piece.

On the upside, Mr. Rider has aged well. I'm 30-years older than when I met Rich, but he's only aged about six years in that same span. Perhaps I could use a cancellation or two myself, to slow the aging process.



Again, I've filed more than my share of online grievances over the years. I mean hey, come on, a sleeveless space suit design in the New Warriors: Reality Check series? However, all of the reading research associated with contributing to this festival of fun reminded me of why we are here. No matter when, or where or why, this fictional fellow named Rich Rider has entertained and/or inspired us in some way and left us wanting more. Regardless of the version, of the character we all want more stories, more triumphs over adversity, more attempts to be funny, and more journeys from one end of the Marvel to the other. Rich Rider

who is part man, part rocket, part bucket -- this silly kid, who could be any one of us, was in the right place at the right time, and continues to want to make the very best of it, to be the hero in time of need.



AFTERWORD BY ANDY SCHMIDT - EDITOR OF ANNIHILATION

When I proposed Annihilation two years ago, I wasn't a Nova fan. In fact, he wasn't in the originally proposed cast. When my lead characters became unavailable, I started searching cosmic Marvel for new faces to me that might have stories to tell. That's when I stumbled on "the human rocket."

I thought Nova (a.k.a. Richard Rider) was a pretty dorky Spider-man knockoff at first, but then I started looking at his origin and turning my head like a perplexed dog. Marv Wolfman, Nova's creator, wasn't ripping Spider-Man off (or Green Lantern, for that matter) when he created Nova; he was really onto something! A feet-of-clay hero charged with keeping intergalactic peace? That's awesome!

So I started reading Nova comics and—just being honest again—I didn't love them. For the most part, they kind of underwhelmed me, but I still thought there was great stuff in the character. And that's when Annihilation transformed. My original central characters were well-formed soldiers and leaders, but Nova was just a kid. He would grow in new ways and become a man right before our eyes. He was a far superior choice than my original leads.

And now I've been eating and sleeping Nova for two years. As he grew into a leader and hero, I grew as a professional and man. It may have been chance that Nova and I both grew up at the same time, but I don't think so. I learned a lot from Nova and his dilemma.

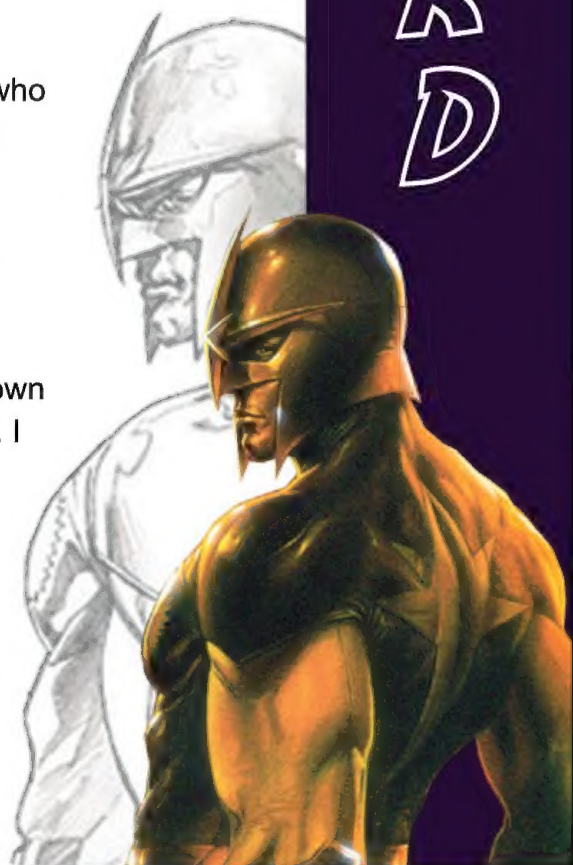
And I'm not the only one. I've met hundreds of Nova fans who feel a deep emotional connection to the character. Richard Rider is a friend to some, a hero to others. But all boiled down, he's important to us. So here's my chance to say something on behalf of all Nova fans and I'm not going to miss it.

Thank you, Marv Wolfman. I'm a better man for having known Richard Rider, Nova. I appreciate your creation very much. I wasn't a Nova fan two years ago, but now I'm more than just a fan—in point of fact, he's like a brother to me.

Andy Schmidt
January 2007

*Art from the cover of
Annihilation Prologue
by Gabriele Dell'Otto*

A F T E R W O R D





RECOGNIZING THE NOVA FANS WHO CONTRIBUTED THEIR TIME AND EFFORTS TO ROCKET BOOSTERS!

DARREN BLACKBURN (writer, artist, colorist of the 'Message Home' comic book)

Darren Blackburn is 39 (going on 40) and hails from the United Kingdom. Gemini. Part-Time Artist/ Full-Time Printer. Has been a passionate fan of comics since 1980 (give or take a mili-second); bought his first second-hand issue of The Man Called Nova No.6 at a local market and has been a Nova fan ever since!

COREY BLAKE (writer of the 'New Warriors Memories' article)

Corey Blake runs the New Warriors Continuity Conundrum, a chronology resource fan-site located at <http://newwarriors.wordpress.com>. He also co-moderates the New Warriors Message Board, which can be found at <http://members3.boardhost.com/NewWarriors>. He is also an editor for Dig Comics, the self-publishing venture of Miguel Cima, creator/writer of The Binder, in-stores early 2007, and other properties. Visit <http://www.miguelcima.com> for more information. If that wasn't enough, he is also an actor and writer, performing both on screen and stage. <http://www.CoreyBlake.com> has more. Corey lives in Los Angeles, CA, with his wife Nahleen and adorable cat Cleo.

DON LUND (writer of the 'First Flights To Glory', 'Aversions to Versions' and Top Ten articles)

Once upon a time, in a far away place, a planet exploded, but it didn't have anything to do with Don Lund's origin. A former U.S. Marine turned journalist has been lucky enough to find a wife who lets him read and write about comics, as well as two awesome sons way smarter than their dad. He currently attends college as the World's Oldest College Senior in hopes of eventually teaching history.

BUTCH MAPA (artist of the United Front recruitment poster)

Butch Mapa is an artist based out of Manila, Philippines. He is currently working on a fantasy title called The Quest, coming out soon from Arcana comics. You can catch him on his website at www.butchmapa.tk.

BRANDON SEIFERT (writer of the 'Xandar' article)

Brandon Seifert is a freelance journalist from Alaska, currently residing in Portland. He helps fact-check the Official Handbooks of the Marvel Universe for free, but he hopes to get Marvel to actually pay him for his writing someday.

DOUG SMITH (writer of the 'What About That Time?', 'What Might Have Been' and 'Nova Prime Starship' articles and extras, interviewer, graphic designs and layouts, fanzine editor and publisher)

Doug runs the Nova Prime Page (www.novaprimepage.com). He has assisted with the Nova-related entries for the 2006 *Official Handbook of Marvel Universe* series. Doug gave advice on Nova for the *New Warriors* limited series in 2005. His true super power was convincing his wife, Sheila, to marry him despite his obsession with comics. They have one son, Mitchell, who sadly doesn't have any interest in comic books but is better off socially because of it.

PIERRE VILLENEUVE (artist of the 'Novas' and the Nova cover art)

Pierre has been working as an artist since 1996. He has worked on many animated projects and is currently the artist and co-creator of FlashbackUniverse.com - the first comic designed specifically for the CBR format! Come see Pierre at comicspace.com/pierrevilleneuve/.